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DERWENT HOWARD



43

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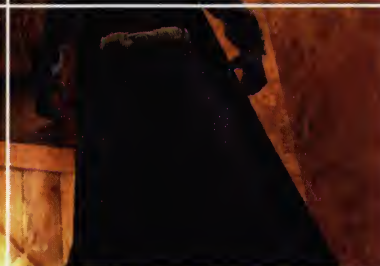
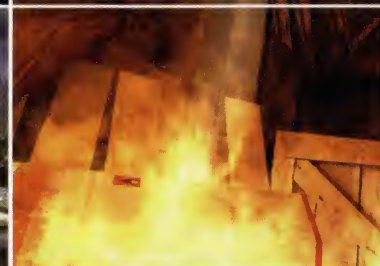
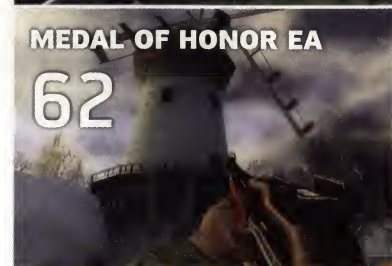
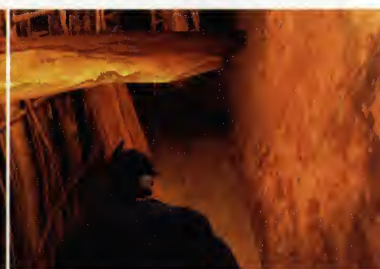
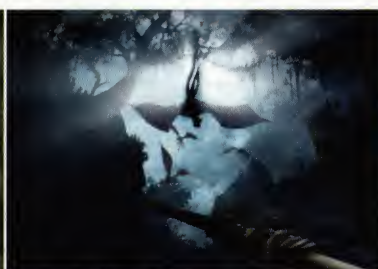
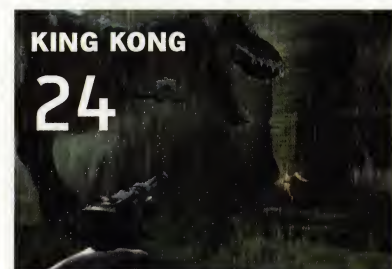
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EDITOR'S LETTER

There may not be an "I" in team but there is a Tristan, Luke, Paul and Phill in OPS2's A-team! It's taken me months of begging, bribing and flat-out threatening people to organise the best... well, the second best magazine team in the business. We hate their guts, but dammit we respect the staff on *Australian Kickboxer's Monthly* - especially after they beat the snot out of Paul. He won't be calling their sport 'sissy ballet dancing' again.

To celebrate the addition of our new staff, and Paul's recent release from intensive care, I'd like to take a minute to introduce the dedicated staff of OPS2. Mr. PlayStation himself, Tristan Ogilvie, is a living legend in the gaming industry. Our new deputy knows more about PlayStation than Ken Kutaragi, has comic delivery that makes Owen Wilson look like an unemployed mime and holds the world record for completing *San Andreas*, and downing six cases of beer, in one lunch break. Respect!

Before joining the team as staff writer, Paul worked on *Ralph* magazine. Paul is such a huge PlayStation fan he turned his back on a career of semi-naked supermodels to join the team. That's hardcore!

Our second staff writer, Luke Reilly, is the only member of the team with a proper journalism degree and is clearly the brains of the team. The rest of us just forged our credentials - let's keep that on the 'down low' though, guys.



Before signing up as OPS2's art director Phill worked as *Urban Hitz's* photographer and designer. It's hard to forget because there's always a steady stream of hot hip hop hunnies coming in to see him. Not that we're complaining.

Now that you've met the team, don't be strangers. Say "Hi" when you see us lining up for our PSP when it launches next month. See you there.

NARAYAN PATTISON

Editor

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?



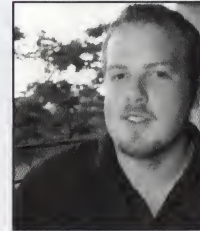
LUKE REILLY

After arriving back in Oz from an awesome Scandinavian press trip with a stack of unfinished writing to do, the last thing you want is Paul singing "My Boyfriend's Back" all morning. He wasn't even playing *SingStar Pop* - he was just telling the office his great news.



PHILLIP JORGE

When I wasn't busy wooing this month's celebrity guest stars (will Giana and Lelsel ever stop calling?), I've been hammering *God of War* with a vengeance (the game, not the guy with the big sword)!



TRISTAN OGILVIE

I'm off to spend a couple of nights in Paris. I'll be sure to use protection because, like the rest of the world, I know where she's been. Just kidding! I totally meant Paris the city. Oh come on babe, dry those tears.



PAUL FREW

After recently breaking up with my girlfriend I've been re-adjusting to single life. Taking up the whole couch, ignoring the romantic comedy DVDs and actually having cash in my wallet - yeah, it's been tough.



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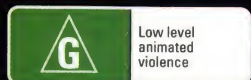
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MAYHEM



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This photo isn't black and white, Hideo just is



The first MGS4 hints are in this image. Every character here will appear in the final game!

NOWHERE TO HIDE

FIRST DETAILS ON MGS4

Where is Solid Snake headed? We find out from the man himself

With *Metal Gear Solid 3*'s successful release only a few months behind us, Hideo Kojima shocked the world by announcing that development on *MGS4* for PS3 was already quite advanced. While other journalists had to make do with daydreaming about what the highly anticipated sequel, *OPS2* was lucky enough to sit down with Hideo for the inside scoop!

OPS2: What can you tell us about the story or location for the sequel?

HK: If you see the trailer of *MGS4* we have the concept of "no place to hide". That's the kind of situation it's going to be for *MGS4*. This doesn't mean that Snake will no longer hide or that the game is no longer a stealth game. It *will* be a stealth game however the situation will change. In the past there was a concrete wall, building or something jungle where Snake could hide. But like in the trailer, if a

bomb explodes on the building [then] he has no place to hide. So the environment might move, it might fade away, it might be destroyed. There might be situations where Snake cannot hide so that's why we say "no place to hide" in the trailer.

OPS2: Come on Hideo, surely you can tell us more than that?

HK: You'll get a totally new feeling of this new stealth game [style]. In the *Metal Gear* series it was very clear, the good guys against bad guys. Snake had to sneak into an enemy's base, etc. But this time in *MGS4* it won't be as simple as A versus B. There will be more groups like A, B, C, D. There'll be more situations – complex situations where it's not your everyday hero versus the villain.

OPS2: We know Solid Snake will be the main character. What about Ocelot and the other characters from the series?

HK: Popular characters from *MGS1* and 2 will

appear as an all-star cast. For instance there'll be Vamp, Ralden and Ocelot. There are two [other characters] I can't [talk] about right now but you have to kind of imagine who they are.

OPS2: There have been rumours about a *Metal Gear Solid* movie, how involved in the process would you like to be if there was a movie?

HK: The franchise was created by myself, so [it's] like a child to me. I want to get involved in some way. Like for instance checking the story or checking how it's going. I don't want to leave my child on its own, even if it goes to a different area such as a movie.

OPS2: What about your other child? Would you like to make another *Zone of the Enders* game?

HK: I would like to create a sequel. However, it's quite difficult because it's a robot themed world. Meaning, in Japan it might sell quite well – but [not] in the Western territories. So from that point it's quite difficult to create a sequel. **NP**

Capcom, who distributed GTAIII in Japan, is kicking up a stink about the Kanagawa prefecture's decision to ban the sale of it to minors. We don't get what all the

SNOW JOB

GRAB THE SNOW TYRES

SSX is going on tour

Truth be told, we're a little confused over the title of the latest installment in EA's snowboarding series, *SSX On Tour*. Mainly because the game is set on just the one mountain – a gigantic mountain for sure – but there won't be any hopping around the globe like the new moniker implies.

The only real departure is the inclusion of skiing for the first time in the series. We're not talking about rickety wooden skis either; we mean cutting edge twin-tip skis that allow acrobatic tricks that can't be performed on a board.

There are 12 tracks in total packed with far more traffic than before, and the illusion of speed will be more overwhelming than ever thanks to incredibly convincing new motion blur effects.

You can expect the usual mix of fireworks and over-the-top tricks when *SSX On Tour* hits the plste this November. Remember to dress appropriately. **TO**



i Info Nudge

WINNERS

Cold Winter Giveaway – Congratulations to those who spotted *Cold Winter's* Andrew Sterling on the top left-hand corner of page 72 in OPS2 #41. The following readers have each picked up a copy of the ice-cold shooter and a PS2 network adaptor – Ben Robertson, VIC, Alan Quinell, NSW, Magnus Newman, WA, Beth Yeats, WA, Simon Catopodis, SA

Element Giveaway – Cameron Douglas' (QLD) skating injury made a bystander throw-up – that's good enough for us! Nice one, Cameron!

IT'S AN HONOUR

Although not officially announced, it's being reported that EA Los Angeles has been working on the next *Medal of Honor* game, *Airborne*, for the last six months and is set to release it alongside the PS3 next year. The FPS will tell an almost true story of a group of paratroopers similar to those in the miniseries *Band of Brothers*. After the disappointing *European Assault* (see page 62 for our review) we expect EA Los Angeles to bounce back with something special, and *Airborne* looks like it could do the job.



PUSSY TOWN

Red Ant recently announced it'll be distributing *Hello Kitty Mission Rescue* to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the classic series. King Block and his evil troops from Planet Rock have invaded Sanrio Town, the "happiest little town on Earth". Only Hello Kitty and her trusty penguin sidekick Badtz Maru and his alien-bashing flying pan stand in their way. You can also become Cube Kitty when using special weapons. Okaay... We're already confused beyond belief, but pussy lovers are bound to get a kick out of this when it pounces on shelves later this year.



NEW RESIDENTS

According to many sources the next two *Resident Evil* films are penned and ready to go. The next film due, *Resident Evil: Afterlife*, looks to once again feature mega-babe Milla Jovovich as Jill Valentine and be filmed right here in Oz. All we know about the fourth *Resident Evil* film is that the script is completed and ready to roll once *Afterlife* has wrapped up. We'll let you know when more info comes in, otherwise drop us a line if you see any zombies roaming the streets in your area.



MONKEY MANIA

SOLID SIMIAN

Metal Gear goes ape

After the damn, dirty apes made a cameo in Hideo Kojima's latest epic, *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, it only makes sense that Snake and the gang are returning the favour in the new *Ape Escape*.

Metal Gear Solid will be a bonus minigame in the upcoming *Ape Escape 3* from Sony, and will see Piposnake, a monkey fed with Solid Snake's tactical data, sneak around stealthy environments armed with a silenced banana pistol.

An army of monkey special forces soldiers have stolen *Metal Gear*, making the Dr Evil-esque demand of 10 billion bananas in just 72 hours before they unleash the superweapon. The government intended on sending Solid Snake, but he was apparently on the toilet at the time and so they sent a stealthy simian instead.

Locker room posters of apes in bikinis are already confirmed (oddly enough we're not joking), and CODEC conversations consisting of 'Ooh-ooh' and 'Aah-aah' are also a likely inclusion. **TO**



fuss is about – at least it didn't get banned outright! Stranger things can happen in a land where you can buy used women's underwear from vending machines!



BLOKE IN THE PUB

I was eavesdropping on a couple of tossers in the back corner of my watering hole the other day who were talking about how videogames are no longer for kids, just for adults and that's why the government should implement an R rating for games.

Now I'm all for an R rating, but to say that videogames are only for "mature gamers" is like saying beer is only for men. Nothing is better than seeing a fine woman enjoying an icy cold beer... I mean, my point is that gaming isn't an exclusive club. There's still a swag of younger people playing videogames. How would games like *Finding Nemo* go platinum if there wasn't? These days, videogames are tailored for a variety of audiences – and so they should be. We need Winnie the Pooh just as much as we need Duke Nukem, and I'm not afraid to admit it.

Do you think *Pokemon*, *Dragonball Z* and all those cartoons that can cause epileptic fits are played by "mature gamers"? These cartoons are the most popular form of kids' entertainment since marbles. Then you've got your other games like *Spyro*, *Crash Bandicoot*, *Sonic the Hedgehog* – all aimed at little tackers and they sell by the boatload.

I'm so sick of the narrow mindedness of some people. It's just so god damn ridiculous. I can't take it anymore. Where's the bartender?

DIESEL-POWERED

A HIT IN THE MAKING

Vin to step into 47's threads

Vin Diesel is set appear in a Hollywood adaptation of Io Interactive's *Hitman* franchise. The wheels appear to have been greased at Fox, contrary to rumours last year that hinted at a Paramount production featuring Christian Bale.

Vin Diesel, a hardcore gamer himself, seems a slightly odd choice for the role (we would have gone with Jason Statham from *Snatch*) but he should give the flick the appeal it deserves. Although his choice in scripts has been a little shady of late, he did prove his acting chops in *Saving Private Ryan*, and giving 2 *Fast 2 Furious* and *XXX2* the big finger was commendable – so we're not giving up straight away.

It seems Diesel is also expected to do voice and motion-capture work for the next version of *Hitman* (*Blood Money's* sequel) which will coincide with the film's release. *Hitman* is being produced by Adrian Askarieh, Daniel Alter and Chuck Gordon. We don't know who they are either, but Askarieh and Gordon are also producing *Spy Hunter* with The Rock slated to headline. **LR**



STOP PRESS

TRUTH REVEALED

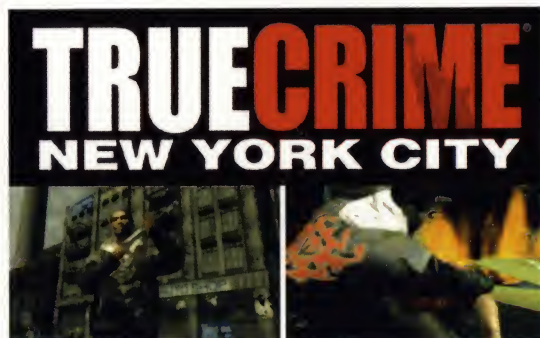
Next True Crime city exposed!

It's official – the location for the next installment of *True Crime* is New York City.

There's no word on whether it's just Manhattan Island or if it includes any of the surrounding areas like Brooklyn or The Bronx – but we don't doubt the game will be bloody huge.

True Crime: New York City promises incredibly detailed and destructible environments, a totally overhauled combat system, diverse objectives and motorcycles (although that last one sounds strangely familiar!).

We're sure looking forward to wreaking havoc in The Big Apple but, even though we had to wait a week longer than promised, the news wasn't quite the punch in the face we expected – it was revealed last issue that *Driver 4* is already heading for the streets of NYC as well. **LR**



STEAMY BALLS

FULL STEAM AHEAD!

Get animated with Steamboy

If you're a fan of crazy Japanese anime films you'll be happy to know we've got 10 copies of *Steamboy* on DVD to give away.

For those who didn't read our review last issue, *Steamboy* is the story of a teenager who inherits an invention called the Steamball and must protect from an evil group who plan on using it to destroy the world. You know, the usual. To win a copy of *Steamboy*, simply tell us your own invention and how it works in 25 words or less. We promise we won't steal it. **PF**



For conditions of entry, turn to the Cricket 2005 giveaway on page 14.

Vegeta Saga 1

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NEW SPORT FRANCHISES

1. EA Sports Elephant Polo 2005

The only Elephant Polo game officially licensed by the World Elephant Polo Association. Features all the official rules and tournaments, including the King's Cup in Hua Hin, Thailand.

2. Pro Evolution Elephant Polo

Lacks the official license and WEPA events and teams, but overall it's the best representation of the sport to date.

3. Championship Bog Snorkeling

Officially endorsed by 2004 and 2005 World Champion Phillip John, it features licensed snorkels and flippers to kit out your swimmer.

4. UWHA Underwater Hockey

Supported by Underwater Hockey Australia, battle it out against 20 international teams to become Underwater Hockey world champions. Features incredibly realistic water physics and a variety of pools from around the world.

5. International Dodgeball Manager 2005

Step into the unforgiving world of World Championship Dodgeball. Sign and train players, negotiate sponsorship, customise your kit and stadium and get your team to the top of the ladder.

6. Randy Ferbey's Extreme Curling

Endorsed by the World Curling Federation and boasting an unprecedented level of input from the Canadian 2005 World Men's Curling champions, Randy Ferbey's Extreme Curling is the most realistic curling game ever made.

7. Tchoukball 2005

A bold game, but because any form of defense and contact are forbidden in Tchoukball (pronounced 'chook ball') players find themselves becoming increasingly frustrated when playing.

8. Justin Beckett's Pro Lumberjack

Including a host of different wood-chopping events and a swag of real-life lumberjacks, Justin Beckett's Pro Lumberjack is the number one lumberjack sim. Also includes a 'Create-A-Lumberjack' tool and EyeToy support.

9. International Superstar Dwarf-Tossing featuring Manuel Wackenheim

The little known sport of Dwarf-Tossing, originally invented in the US and Australia in the 1980s, makes for an addictive game. It boasts incredibly realistic rag-doll physics. It also features a behind-the-scenes look at the 1.14 metres tall Manuel Wackenheim's battle with the UN to win back his right to be thrown around after the sport was banned in France. The tiny stuntman can't be tossed around any more, but there's always game royalties.

10. Log Rolling Unleashed

Now you don't have to stand on a floating log with your mate and try to balance on it – you can do it in the comfort of your own home. A somewhat short-lived game, we're expecting a big improvement from Log Rolling Unleashed 2.

SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

The Matrix: Path of Neo – the 'one' that we want!



Remember, Neo knows kung-fu. So he'll be skilled in using various ancient weapons like samurai swords, nunchakus and er, lead pipes.

Here are a few of the 1,500 Agent Smiths you'll be taking on at once. Check out the detail!

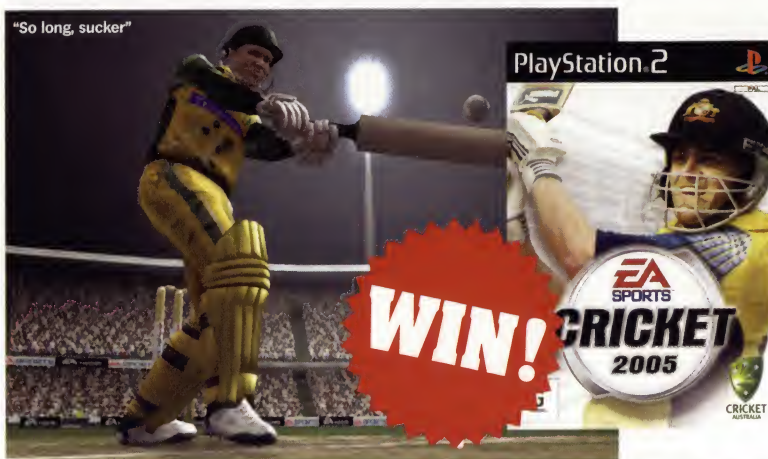
Keanu looks better then ever. Ladies will be up for a special treat in some of the later levels where he struts around without a shirt on.

BATTER UP

HOWZAT!

Score a free copy of EA sports Cricket 2005!

Aussie cricketers aren't usually hard to find (just follow the empty VB cans), unless, of course, we've hidden one of them somewhere in the magazine. We've got 10 games to give away to 10 lucky readers, so get out your magnifying glass and find the hidden version of the cricketer (pictured below) somewhere else in the mag! Naturally, he's not on the Cricket 2005 review, so don't even start there. You might be stumped for a while but if you search hard enough you'll spot him. Don't forget to include the page number he's hiding at with your entry. **PF**



HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with either "Cricket 2005 Giveaway", "Steamboy Giveaway" or "Pyramat Giveaway" in the subject line or post your entries via snail mail to OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries must be clearly marked and include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, contact number and, most importantly, your full address and postcode! All competitions close 24 August 2005. This competition is also open to NZ residents.

OPS2 CHALLENGE

GOING FOR GOLD

Olympic champion, Lethal Leisel Jones, challenges OPS2!

Olympic Champion, Leisel Jones, recently challenged OPS2 to a few bouts of Tekken 5. Naturally, we stepped up to the plate. The Queensland swimmer has been a Tekken fan for quite some time. "I just bought the game recently, after someone recommended it to me," said Leisel. "I had Tekken 4 and became quite addicted and now I'm [playing] Tekken 5 and absolutely loving it!"

The gold medallist has dabbled in the boxing ring and even said she uses the fierceness and competitiveness of the characters as inspiration when she's competing in the pool.

Challenging OPS2's Tekken champ, Paul Frew, on a cinema screen (thanks to Sony and Bondi Junction Greater Union) the brawling was fast and furious. Lethal Leisel wasn't as wet behind the ears as we'd thought, and it was clear she'd been practising. While the 20 foot tall Tekken 5 characters battled it out, Paul held his own against both a tenacious Olympic athlete and a flurry of Maltesers launched at him by Naz and Luke.

It came down to a tiebreaker match to decide who was the champ. OPS2 came out on top in the end, but it was only by a fingernail and what some would call a lucky low blow.

Fortunately for Paul, Leisel didn't use any of her

Tekken combos on him afterwards, but we did hear her calling for a rematch while Paul was busy doing his victory dance. Rumble on over to page 58 for our official verdict on Tekken 5. **FR**



WATCH OUT!

UNDEAD REVOLVER

Pistols at dawn, crucifix at dusk

While there have been far too few Wild West-themed PS2 games released, there's been absolutely no Wild West-themed PS2 games with undead vampires in them at all. No Neckbite at the OK Corral and no A Fistful of Garlic.

Fortunately that void is about to be filled by Darkwatch, a first-person shooter where players step into the dusty boots of Jericho Cross, an outlaw bitten by an ancient Vampire Lord who must join the mysterious Darkwatch secret society in an attempt to thwart the wave of evil spreading over the American West.

Powerful assault vehicles are confirmed, and you'll even get to saddle up on a bloodthirsty vampire horse when Darkwatch is released later this year. Hi-ho Silver, away! **TO**



KICKING BACK

LOUNGE AROUND

Strap yourself in and feel the Gs!

The Pyramat, an invention that Penthouse said would allow you "to experience every rumble and know the true meaning of the word Interactive", has arrived on Australian shores and your pals at OPS2 have got two to give away.

The Pyramat 550 Sound Lounger is a cushioned vibrating mat with full surround sound that provides a unique gaming experience. You don't just have to use it with games though. The Pyramat can also jack into any audio device - TVs, VCRs and DVD players are all compatible.

To win one, simply tell us who you'd love to be lounging around with on the Pyramat 550 Sound Lounger in 25 words or less (bonus points for entries that don't mention Paris Hilton). **PF**

For conditions of entry, turn to the Cricket 2005 giveaway on page 14.



contributing around 1.7 million to that total. 90 million consoles? That equates to roughly one PS2 per 72 human beings on the planet!

PS2 TOP 10 GAMES CHART

1

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS steals the top spot once again. It's been three months since C.J.'s been on top of the charts and he still has no idea why. He's got fast cars like GT4 and uses force like in Star Wars – just don't ask him about his lightsaber.

2

LEGO STAR WARS charms its way into second place. Apparently Naz is an expert on picking up studs so he's been playing through it trying to find every single one so he can unlock the bonus level. Check out page 84 if you want to know where they are too.

3

STAR WARS EPISODE III: REVENGE OF THE SITH shows us that Star Wars fever is still hot. Did you know George Lucas is in the film? He's the blue skinned Baron Papanoida who appears during Palpatine's arrival back on Coruscant. What won't he do?

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	DISTRIBUTOR
4	Gran Turismo 4	Racing	Sony
5	Madagascar	Platformer	Activision
6	Juiced	Racing	THQ
7	Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Racing	Take 2
8	MX vs ATV Offroad Fury	Racing	THQ
9	SingStar Party Bundle	Party	Sony
10	Need for Speed Underground 2	Racing	EA

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

AUGUST

AFL Premiership 2005	Sports	Sony
Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	Platformer	Take 2
Dead to Rights II	Action	EA
Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	Action	Vivendi
NHL 2006	Sports	EA
Worms 4: Mayhem	Strategy	Atari

SEPTEMBER

Beatdown: Fists of Vengeance	Beat 'em up	THQ
Brave	Action	Sony
Burnout: Revenge	Racing	EA
Conflict: Global Terror	Action	Atari
Fahrenheit	Adventure	Atari
Nightmare Before Christmas	Adventure	THQ
Ricky Ponting International Cricket	Sports	Atari
Spartan: Total Warrior	Action	THQ
Total Overdose	Action	Atari

LATE 2005

Bully	Adventure	Take 2
Call of Duty 2: Big Red One	FPS	Activision
FIFA 2006	Sports	EA
Getting Up	Action	Atari
Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire	Action	EA
Incredible Hulk: Ultimate Destruction	Sports	Take 2
James Bond 007: From Russia With Love	Action	EA
King Kong	Action	Ubisoft
Marvel Nemesis: Rise of the Imperfects	Action	EA
Metal Slug 4 & 5	Action	QV
NBA Live 2006	Sports	EA
Need for Speed Most Wanted	Racing	EA
Painkiller	FPS	QV
Prince of Persia: Kindred Blades	Adventure	Ubisoft
Rainbow Six 4: Lockdown	FPS	Ubisoft
Rugby League 2	Sports	Tru-Blu
Shrek: SuperSlam	Wrestling	Activision
Soul Calibur III	Beat 'em up	Sony
The Godfather	Action	EA
The Sims 2	Strategy	EA
The Warriors	Action	Take 2
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2006	Sports	EA
Tony Hawk's America Wasteland	Sports	Activision
V8 Supercars 2005	Racing	Atari
WRC 5	Racing	Sony
X-Men Legends 2	Action	Activision



Loading

RALLY GOOD

DOWN AND DIRTY

Evolution's baby evolves

Evolution Studio's brilliant WRC franchise is returning to PS2 in a big, big way.

Focusing on unpredictably at every corner, deformable environments and an all-new multiplayer mode with eight cars on track, WRC is on track to be a winner.

Unanticipated events may change the outcome of events – a bush-fire or flood, falling rocks or a crashed opponent could be just around the corner so you'll need to be on your toes, just like the pros.

An emotional co-driver will now react dynamically to the action, so you'll be able to hear his fear if you're flirting with debilitating injury too often.

Injecting even more realism, a brand new damage system will see debris strewn from your

car, and any inflicted collision damage can now be sustained across the whole stage. The new deformable environments mean you can smash into a wall and have it collapse like it should!

The multiplayer modes will see up to eight cars compete simultaneously on one of 16 purpose built circuits, and smashing your mates off them is highly encouraged.

The tentatively titled WRC: Rally Evolution is scheduled to hit the dirt later this year. **LR**



YO BRO

HARD EARNED

This band of brothers ain't done yet!

A sequel to *Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30*, the most brutally realistic WWII shooter on PS2, is currently heading for release at the end of this year.

Brothers in Arms: Earned in Blood will combine the authenticity and squad-based action that made the original so damn good, with a new narrative, new multiplayer missions and a much-needed co-op mode.

As Sergeant Joe Hartsock you'll lead your squad through occupied France armed with new weapons and command new vehicles like the M10 "Wolverine" Tank Destroyer. **LR**



BRAINS

DEAD MAN WALKING

The resurrection of Romero

According to its developers, the upcoming zombie shooter *City of the Dead* is set to be "the *Burnout* of the shooting genre".

It's a bold claim, but it doesn't really hold as much weight as a similar claim made by *Burnout* creator Criterion about its hotly anticipated *Black*.

No matter. With the blessing of George A. Romero, the father of zombie films, it's guaranteed to at least be authentic to the genre, and packed with extreme amounts of detailed dismemberment and gratuitous gore.

One mode in *City of the Dead* that does mimic an element of *Burnout* is the 'single shot' mode.

Similar to *Burnout*'s Crash mode, players are encouraged to take out as many zombies as they can with a single bullet, incorporating dangling crates and explosive barrels in order to do the most damage.

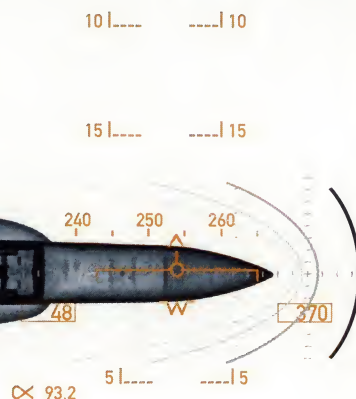
We'll try and feast a bit more on the developer's brains before *City of the Dead* is released in 2006. **TO**



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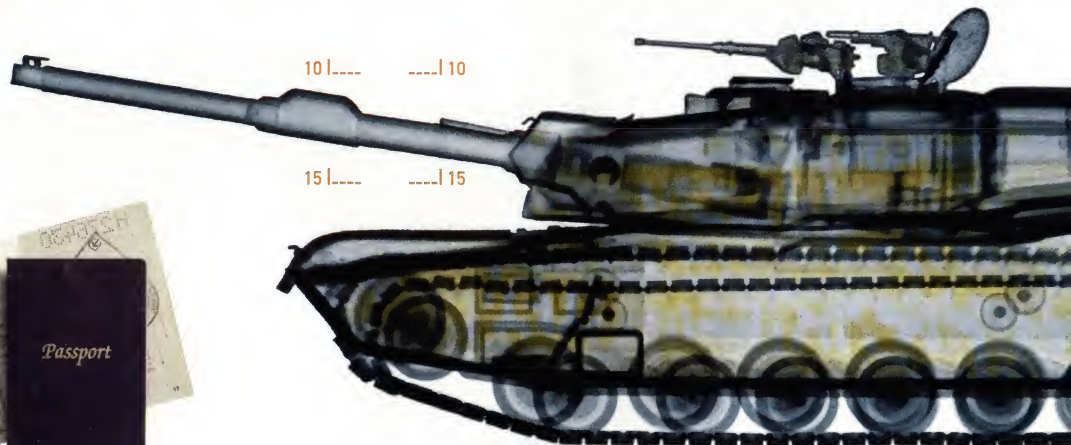
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Feedback

We spend the whole magazine talking to you - now it's your turn!

SPEAK TO US!

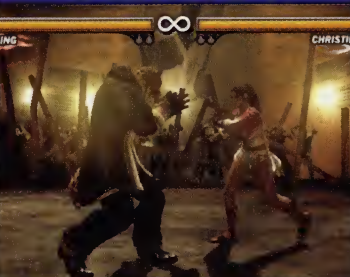
Come on, we know you guys are bursting to get involved. Share your thoughts with the nation's PlayStation 2 owners in the new, improved Feedback section and you could win an exclusive Atari T-shirt and this issue's Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or by email:

OPS2 Feedback
Derwent Howard
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
Email: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au



OPS2 chart

Some games mags are written by people who don't play games very often, but not OPS2 - in fact, we play games so much here that we almost never manage to get a tan in summer! Here's what's been making us pasty this month.



1. TEKKEN 5

Namco's brawler has been dominating our lunch break gaming all this month. Not even Tristan's cheap Jin combos can spoil this baby.



2. GTA SAN ANDREAS

It's our fifth run through and we still can't get enough. We're getting nowhere with our San Fierro girlfriend. What's she waiting for?



3. GOD OF WAR

Could this game be any more addictive. The God mode difficulty is titanium-plated-diamond-style rock hard, but we'll beat it!

ORIGINALITY, OR LACK OF

Oh dear gaming gurus, I got a problem. Not a problem I can just shoot to pieces on *GTA: San Andreas*, but a bigger problem. Now I'm a loyal PlayStation fan. I buy all the great games and I read your magazine fanatically, but there's just one thing. There is no originality anymore! Everywhere I look, some insignificant little games company instead of making a new, original game that I might actually pay \$100 for, takes the current flavour of the month, makes one new feature on it ("Hey, it's just like *GTA* only you stop crimes in between missions!") and expect that the hordes of gamers are indeed stupid enough to buy it. Games like *EyeToy*, *SingStar*, *Stuntman* and (though I'm embarrassed to say it) *Super Monkey Ball* and other interesting concepts have blown away the expectations of both myself and my PS2 brethren. These are the games that deserve to be traded for my hard earned cash instead of another FPS or driving sim. If we don't stop these games, many more of my friends will end up with a new game in the bin because they realised that one new feature won't cut it anymore!

Carl Gregory, Newcastle

*You've nailed the point at the end of your letter. It's up to gamers, not developers, to encourage originality. If endless sequels and Grand Theft Auto rip-offs weren't outselling original games so often then developers would make a lot more original games. Developers don't like making sequels. No one likes doing the same job every day of their life and developers are no different. They'd much rather be making something fresh and different. So give them the greenlight they're waiting for. Put down that copy of *Lame GTA Clone 7* and pick up something new like *God of War* or *Destroy All Humans!**



PS3 - HELL YEAH!

Is anyone else really excited about the announcement of PlayStation 3? I suppose that's a bit like saying is George Bush insane? Is *San Andreas* the best thing that ever happened to PS2? Is PlayStation better than Xbox? The answer to all these would have to be: hell yeah!!! The PS3 is good, and I mean REALLY good. It has 35 times the power of the PS2, and twice the power of the Xbox 360! Stick that in you pipe and smoke it, Bill "I'm-too-rich-for-my-own-good" Gates! But anyway, back to sanity for just a little while. All that power coupled with the Blu-ray disc, which can hold 50gb compared to the DVD's puny 8gb. This leads to some interesting possibilities... like *Gran Turismo* with damage! (Shock! Horror!) ... A *Grand Theft Auto* game that's not based in a city or state, but in a whole country or, heck why not, the whole world! There would have to be endless possibilities, don't you agree? One more thing... What is the PS3 going to cost? I believe/hope it won't cost as much as the PS2 did when it first came out (\$1,000). Well, here's hoping all goes well...

Aaron, New Zealand

You're preaching to the converted, buddy. The PS3 is the sexiest thing on this planet! The autographed poster Natalie Portman sent us of herself in a

Playboy bunny outfit has been torn down and replaced with our new PS3 poster. We reckon you'll be very happy with the PS3's price tag when it's released in March or April next year. We're confident it will be no more than \$699. By the way, the PS2 was \$749 (not \$1,000) when it was released in 2000.

PS3 MAG

Hey guys, well done with the mag. Over the last week have you noticed with the E3 blowout of information about the PS3? I think its time for you guys to change the mag into a

PS2-3 hybrid, much like your PS1-2 hybrid a few years back (which I still have a few of). After seeing the *Killzone 2* footage, I along with most of the world, left my jaw dangling for the duration and as the only person I know to have clocked *Killzone* I'm really bloody excited. But seriously, don't call yourself a PS2 mag while reporting on the PS3, make the switch. I know how people say that the PS2 has a lot of life in it still, no one cares! Just do it!

Kohl Stammers, via email



We've had a lot of emails and letters asking us what's going to happen to the mag when the PS3 comes out. It's hard to predict exactly how we'll do things next year but the current plan is for us to start up a PS3 magazine around March 2006 when PS3 is released locally. We'll also continue to produce this PS2 magazine for a good few years to come. Sony and all of the major games companies are committed to making stacks of exciting PS2 games until at least 2008 and we'll be there every step of the way to keep you covered. And what do you mean no one cares about the PS2? Are you crazy?

STUCK IN THE PAST

I'm stilling playing GTA: SA. In fact, I reckon I'll still be playing it in a month's time when E3 will have finished and the next-gen games of 2005 have all been shown. I can't help but think that we'll be disappointed. The PS2 had an amazing year with 2004 and I doubt 2005 will be better. No one's going to top SA any time soon, and I reckon this is also true for the other consoles and PC gamers. Nothing on Xbox this year will beat Halo 2, nothing on PC will beat Half Life 2, and nothing on GameCube will beat whatever it was Gamecube fans played last year. I know there's a huge range of games coming (SOCOM 3, Soul Calibur III, Black Hawk Down, and Resident Evil 4) but I can't get excited about these games the way I did about SA. Maybe I'm being overly cynical and critical. Who knows? Perhaps when E3 rolls around there'll be a shock and Killzone 2 will

appear to make us all forgive and forget Killzone, perhaps the new From Russia with Love, will finally make up for the large number of average Bond games.

Will Joseph, SA

We like you... but you're crazy. There's never been a year in the history of gaming that hasn't been better than the last. With Resident Evil 4, Burnout Revenge and GTA on PSP, this year's going to knock 2004 on its arse! Games keep getting better. That's a scientific fact. Good call on Killzone 2 – you should get into the fortune telling business.

TRENDSETTER

I am a girl who loves her PS2. So much so that I'm currently studying a Multimedia Certificate 4 to become a games designer and I am the only girl in my class. All the guys were shocked and didn't know how to take me at first. I even had one guy come up and say he was shocked that I had even heard of a PS2, let alone played one (I nearly used a CQC move on him). Now the guys are used to me and we are all mates, especially after I told them some of the games I own (GT4, GTA: SA, TimeSplitters 2, MGS3, to name a few). Now it's like I am one of the guys (almost). I think over time the stereotype set about girls not being into games will eventually go, but until then I'm afraid we are a rare breed.

[PS – A huge thanks to you guys. I saw the add to study for multimedia and because of your encouragement of girls getting into games, it made me decide to give it a shot].

Debby Vivian, Vic

You go, girl. That's seriously awesome that you're getting into games development. 95% of developers being guys has to be a big part of the reason why games appeal predominantly to males. Kind of like how Paul is 'predominantly heterosexual' – except on 'Muffin Party Mondays'. Err... anyway, that's fantastic news. Keep us posted – and don't forget to send us a copy of your first game.

DISAPPOINTED MGS FAN

Great mag – never missed an issue yet. I am a big fan of war games, first-person shooters and racing games. I am currently on the hunt for some new war/stealth games and I was going to get MGS3 but after I played it decided not to get it. I loved it and the whole find your food survival thing is wicked but the camera angles just suck so bad. It was good in the other Metal Gear's but they at least were in corridors or rooms and had the radar. Out in the open jungle with no radar I'm sorry to say but they just buggered a great game. It was so annoying due to the lack of sight and having to keep switching to first-person view (which is the only thing wrong with the game). If they made the view like SOCOM or Mercenaries it would be heaps better. I am wondering if anyone else feels the same?

I think this week I'll go and grab a copy of Splinter Cell: Chaos Theory, Full Spectrum Warrior or maybe even Brothers in Arms instead (sorry Konami).
David, via email

IT SHOULD BE A GAME

If you've got a great idea for a game, email it to ops2@derwenthoward.com.au or post it to the usual address. Don't forget to create a cool looking cover. The best one each month scores a free copy of the game of the month!

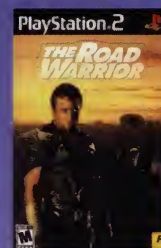


SPONGEBOB AND THE ATTACK OF THE ARMY MEN

Take the qualities from the amazing SpongeBob and Army Men series and combine them to make one action packed game (note sarcasm). When SpongeBob's true identity is revealed and the rest of Bikini Bottom finds out that he is a fugitive. It doesn't take long for the authorities to locate him. Before SpongeBob knows what hit him he is attacked by a group of corrupt army men. SpongeBob is forced to fight for survival in a world where nobody can be trusted.

Blake Whelan, via email

OPS2 verdict: Your packshot is the funniest thing we've seen all week. Give that guy a free game!

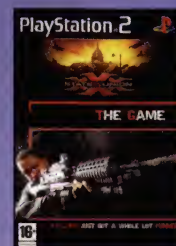


MAD MAX

Max Rockatansky always lived life on the edge, but when the gangs kill his wife and son, he turns to the highways, to get revenge! You take the role of the infamous Mad Max in a free-roaming, post-apocalyptic adventure to wipe out the scum and rule the highways. Experience key elements from all three films, including battle in the Thunderdome and the destruction of the Humungus. When they take over the highways, just remember he's on your side.

James Blondahl, via email

OPS2 verdict: Where do we pre-order our copy?



XXX: STATE OF THE UNION

As an agent you must track a dangerous military splinter group that is planning to overthrow the U.S. Government in the nation's capital. Play as the ultimate bad-ass, Ice Cube, in over 30 levels of action packed gameplay. You can drive, fly, swim and shoot. Do yourself a favour and buy the best third-person action game of 2005. Killing just got a whole lot funnier!!

Aaron, via email

OPS2 verdict: Great tagline. It would have made a much better poster than the movie's real tagline "Prepare for the next level". What the?

NET NATTER

Here at OPS2 Towers, we've been hard at work putting some OPS2 information online, and our forums are now alive and very kicking. We've decided to run the best quotes from our forums here in Feedback, so you can get your point across and have it printed for posterity! Next time you're online be sure to get yourself across to www.derwenthoward.com.au and drop in and say "hi". Keep your thoughts about other consoles to yourself though, or we'll have to smack you with copies of our magazine!

On... Gaming Maturity

I read an article about why Rockstar had such a large amount of violence and sexual references in San Andreas and why their game glorified gang violence. Their response was that the gaming industry was growing up and San Andreas was made for adults, as clearly stated on the cover of the game. Their target audience was from 20 to 30 year olds and this age group would appreciate a piece of entertainment like this. In their opinion, people who grow up playing video games will become parents and start taking up positions of power politically, socially and ethically. They think that once people who truly understand the medium graduate to these kinds of responsibilities, then there will be a different sort of debate, because these people will know what they are talking about. This raises an important question. Has the gaming industry grown up? With the recent surge of mature game, such as San Andreas, The Punisher, Manhunt and Killzone, the game developers certainly think so.
smashingtoxin

Most people at my school think gaming is for immature idiots who have nothing better to do with their time. If the gaming industry can show it's grown up, this could change.
b3takedownmaster

Gamers are definitely growing up as those that were there from the beginning are now 20 years older and want to play good games no matter whether the content of the game is adults only or even a game that is more family orientated.
Suteki

Most of the original gamers were kids or teens in the '80s. Now that it's the '00s all of the kids and teens have grown and the market has continued to cater for them. Right on I say!

Gman

Whenever someone younger than me is in the house I am told to turn the volume off on San Andreas cause of the amount of swearing in it. I can understand this because we don't want five-year olds walking around screaming things like "f--- this" or "this is bulls---". When I rented The Punisher my mum saw the violence in it she banned it from the house. Although I am not happy about this it is still understandable.

CALDOGG

That's alright. My wife would not let me buy Manhunt because of our kids. Now that it is banned you can't get it anymore. I must admit though, I had to agree with her.
dutchy135

We could have this argument until the cows come home and what will we find? Nothing. I agree that there are a lot of contents in videogames that are certainly not for kids to see or play, but why should we, as a gaming community, and most importantly, as adults (well, most of us anyway) have to be told what we can't do in our private lives in our private homes?
Gman

Feedback

We spend the whole magazine talking to you - now it's your turn!

We can't help but agree that MGS3 would have been even better with a third-person view. The good news is that Konami seems to agree too. The recently announced Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence will feature a third-person camera for the whole game. Hurray!

ROCK AND ROLL

Well I'm not gonna start by saying that "you guys rock" or "cool mag", because that's obvious. I wouldn't be writing in if it wasn't. As a proud owner of a PS2, all three GTA games and True Crime, I am really looking forward to the release of *The Warriors*. It looks awesome! I want to personally thank Rockstar for providing me with hours on end of quality gameplay, that keeps me off the streets, and away from drugs. I would also like to thank the guys (and girls) at OPS2 towers, for providing thousands of quality reviews which help me decide which games I'm going to spend the time in front of the TV with.

Philip Karrasch, via email

We're stoked to hear you like the mag. We love writing the mag, we love our readers and we love PlayStation, so we'll keep plugging away as long as you let us. That was a bit soppy... better make a knob joke to clear the air. Our's are bigger than those pine trees that they hollow out and drive cars through. That's right, ladies. Our, numbers are in the book

COLOUR BLIND

I read your mag heaps and all, but I was wondering why the gaming industry doesn't give a damn about us black guys. Here at my place we have more PS2s and games than you can think of, but not a single one of them has a black man as the central character. We need some black men in games, not only to show white people that we like games too, but to kick the asses of white men. Can you rattle up your brains and think of some games with black men as the lead characters? Thanks guys.

Nathan Gou

If you don't have any games with black stars in them then you can't have many games. Have you heard of a little game called Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas? Unless the colour on your TV is busted you should have noticed its star, CJ, is a black man. And he's hardly the lone ranger in gaming. GTA has also inspired plenty of similar games. 50 Cent: Bulletproof, Fear and Respect and True Crime: New York City are all coming out this year and all have black men in the lead roles. And let's not forget every single NBA game.

MOVIE BUFF

Games based on movies are not an uncommon thing nowadays. Anyway, without doubt one of the greatest directors of all time was Stanley Kubrick (don't give me that Spielberg crap) a man who not only shaped the world of cinema but made some pretty good movies along the way. But yet no games? If Rockstar is bothering to waste time making

a game from a crappy piece of junk like *Once Were Warriors* then why don't they create games based on the masterpieces of Kubrick. For example, *Full Metal Jacket*. Start off with a nice tutorial where an insane drill sergeant yells insults and abuse at you when ever you do something wrong. Then you get catapulted into Vietnam. There's even the possibility of *Eyes Wide Shut*. What male in their right mind wouldn't want that, even if it did suck? I'm sure that if the ghost of Kubrick was reading this he would agree with roughly 0.2% of my ideas, but being a believer of reincarnation and with the comforting thought that Kubrick is now a turtle, he cannot contradict me. Kubrick games would be top-sellers and a great step in the area of adult games.

Peter, via email

WWII and Vietnam shooters may be getting stale fast but we agree *Full Metal Jacket* would be a great license. It's hard to know where to start with the rest of your letter, though. *Once Were Warriors* was a great little NZ flick so we're not sure why your sticking the boot into it. It would be a bad choice for a game but that's not a big problem since Rockstar is actually making a game based on *The Warriors* - a completely different movie about gang warfare in New York.

Your idea for an *Eyes Wide Shut* game is without a doubt the worst idea we've ever heard. *Eyes Wide Shut* was two hours of Tom Cruise walking around, doing nothing. A potato has more interactive potential than that film. The minute Tom Cruise's naked ass appears on PS2 we're out - along with self-respecting men everywhere!

BLOWN AWAY

I recently saw a preview for the sequel of the greatest FPS ever, *Killzone 2*, and my jaw nearly hit the ground. It was the greatest thing I have ever experienced, like an apparition of Jesus. The graphics were incredible. I could barely tell that the people weren't real. But it was going to be on the PS3 so I just assumed this was normal for most games that are coming out in the near future.

It was so real. The people's movements were real. The fire and explosions were real. The deaths were real. It was like a Hollywood movie. Forget the opening scene of *Medal Of Honour: Frontline*, this was the most action-filled opening of a game EVER.

Jack, via email

We're still recovering from the *Killzone 2* demo ourselves. The trailer gets at least one daily run in the OPS2 office. Scoot over to page 49 to check out our full preview of what's easily the most ridiculously impressive game ever.

INSIDE GAMING

Naz sits down with the hottest of the hot, Lara Croft

Naz: I love you.

Lara: Umm... that's nice. That's not really a question though.

Naz: You're right. That wasn't very professional was it? My bad. Let's continue. After six games with Core, what made you decide to move to Crystal Dynamics?

Lara: Did you play any of the sequels? I've been fed up with those hacks for years but I was locked into a contract so there wasn't anything I could do about it. As soon as I saw the script for *Tomb Raider IV* where they called it a 'prequel' and wanted me to play a 16-year old girl, I knew they'd completely run out of ideas. The last game was the final straw. I'm supposed to be a tomb raider but it was 15 hours into the stupid game before I even got near a tomb. They may as well have called it *Lara Croft: Boring Street Raider*.

Naz: Ahuh, I'd never thought of it quite like that. Can I have your phone number?

Lara: You can have a restraining order.

Naz: You are a firecracker. I apologise. I just threw that last question in as a test. So, why do you think none of the sequels have matched the huge impact the original *Tomb Raider* had?

Lara: I'd love to take the credit for the original but I think that bloody huge T-rex was a jaw dropper and a half. That scene has been responsible for more soiled pants than the world's supply of laxatives. What's the only thing better than a T-rex?

Naz: The back seat of my car. I'll see you there in what? Five minutes?

Lara: No. For the new game we've got this amazing scene where King Kong fights the T-rex. Then, when they're distracted, I kick Kong in the happy sack. As he drops to the ground I summersault up on top of his crumpling body and eye-gouge the T-rex. Now that's action! The other thing that's great about the sequel is how

committed the cast is to the project. After 17 takes of that scene Kong's love spuds were the size of Volkswagens but he just kept going. What a trooper.

Naz: You've got nice boobies.

Lara: What!?!?

Naz: I mean... I heard you had a boob reduction.

Lara: Yeah that's right. Anyone with big breasts can tell you how much they hurt during athletic stuff. Just ask Paul. If you want an idea of what it felt like for me to do the previous games, grab a couple of 5kg weights, attach them to your chest with fishing hooks and go for a jog. As soon as I saw how many action scenes were in the new script I booked myself in for the operation. As soon as the director found out he tried to fire me, but he changed his mind pretty quickly when I showed him the polaroids of the party he had with the cheerleader, the goat and the vacuum cleaner.

Naz: I think I was at that party... but I don't remember the goat. Must have been really wasted.

Lara: I just remembered I've got to be somewhere else.

Naz: Don't be like that, Lara. There's another party in my pants and you're invited... Lara?



PS2

PlayStation 2



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COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

KSP / JAL / JTY



Pre-play



Jimmy looks for the adult section of the library



"He shouldn't have had the knuckle sandwich!"



"Go on, try it, it tastes like chicken"

FUN FACT!

Jimmy Hopkins' mum has dumped him at Bullworth Academy on the way to her fifth honeymoon. Talk about MILF! It's like they're making a game of Luke's life...



There may not be any blood in the game but that doesn't mean it pulls any punches

ADVENTURE

BULLY

It's time for a little payback

FIRST LOOK PLAYERS: 1 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2 ■ DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR VANCOUVER ■ WEB: www.rockstargames.com/bully ■ LAST SEEN: FIRST-LOOK ■ RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

How many people can honestly say they enjoyed every minute of their school years? Unless you were the biggest kid on the block then it's quite likely you were on the receiving end of at least a couple of wedgies and would like the chance to revisit the schoolyard and turn the tables on your former tormentors.

Rewriting history is exactly what Rockstar's latest adventure lets you do. *Bully* gives you control of Jimmy Hopkins, a stocky young bruiser who's been kicked out of every school he's ever attended. His mother recently dumped him at Bullworth Academy – a weird fusion of *Harry Potter* and a maximum-security prison. Bullworth has the same posh English boarding school exterior, except that instead of flying broomsticks and wisecracking ghosts you'll be dealing with bare knuckle boxing in the quad and cricket bat facials.

Even though *Bully*'s private school setting is about

as far removed from *GTA San Andreas*' gang wars as you can get, Rockstar's trademark approach of trying to cram as much grit and entertainment as possible into every square metre of the game-world is still evident. Within the first couple of minutes, even before we'd left our dorm, we'd already ripped down a Bullworth crest off a wall, flushed one kid's head down the toilet and gotten into a fight with another after switching off the TV he was watching. Forget everything you remember about doing homework and writing out lines on the blackboard – this game packs in just as many hilarious antics as any other Rockstar release.

One major difference you will find with *Bully* is that it's the first adventure game from Rockstar in years where no one dies – or even bleeds. Just because *Bully* is a little more kid-friendly than previous games, doesn't mean it can't still pack a solid punch.

Surprisingly the combat in *Bully* is even more

vicious than it is in *San Andreas*. Every hit you land has a sickeningly meaty crunch to it and it's possible to pick up almost anything in sight and use it as a weapon. Whether you're using typical weapons like cricket bats or unorthodox, makeshift stuff like an unused plate on the lunch table, they're all equally devastating. The most brutal moves by far though, are the grapples. After grabbing one of your schoolmates it's possible to throw them through windows or onto the ground, before submitting them to a humiliating 'spit in the face' finishing move.

Bully offers players a lot more than simply being the school tough guy. Jimmy knows how to take care of himself in a fight, so he's far from the weakest kid in school, but because he's the 'new kid', Jimmy also has to prove himself to both his house prefects and his teachers before he can gain any serious cred.

One early mission sees Jimmy doing a favour



You don't want to know what he's aiming for



The old 'splinter in the sphincter' trick – originally invented by Naz

for his science teacher, a 'Mr Burns-like' crusty old man covered in liver spots. Not only does this guy act like he's knocked back one too many glasses of hydrochloric acid, but his desk is littered with worrying items like human skulls, and even a student's head in a jar. Clearly this is one teacher you don't want to peg the blackboard duster at when he's not looking.

The favour the science teacher asks you to do is to destroy a very rare plant that serves as a sort of unofficial mascot for one of your rival Bullworth houses. To complete the mission we had to rough up a kid for the house's secret password, then beat the snot out of every kid who got in our way. Most students could be dealt with by a few right hooks, but some hid behind cover and tossed baseballs, forcing us to pull out a slingshot and dish out a few black eyes. After this, one cherry bomb was all that was needed to take care of the mission's herbicide objective.

That was the end of our brief look at *Bully*, but before we left, Rockstar threw out a couple jaw-dropping facts that left us desperate to see more. While the events we've described took up less than a day of 'Bully time', the game spans an entire school year and also includes many locations outside of the huge Bullworth grounds! Wowzers – that's one Godzilla-sized chunk of gaming! We can't wait to enrol? **Narayan Pattison**

X PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

BULLY has the same sense of fun and freedom that you'd expect from a Rockstar game but is more kid-friendly thanks to a lighter than usual serving of blood and gore.

BALL HANDLING

If there's one thing school kids never get sick of it's playing with their balls, so it's no surprise that *Bully* has a handful of ball-based minigames.



DODGE THIS

Heading down to the court during gym class throws Jimmy into a fully functional game of dodgeball. The aim is simply to take down the weakest kids on the opposing team with the hardest shots you can manage. Dodgeball... so many memories...



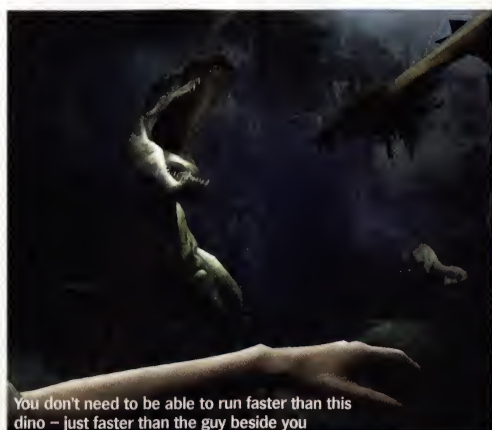
TOUCHDOWN

If you head down to Bullworth's football field you'll find footy players and cheerleaders getting busy on the field. Tossing a ball at another bloke on the sidelines is all you'll need to do to get a game started. Best of all, unlike the normal American footy, there aren't any sissy helmets or shoulder pads in *Bully*'s games.

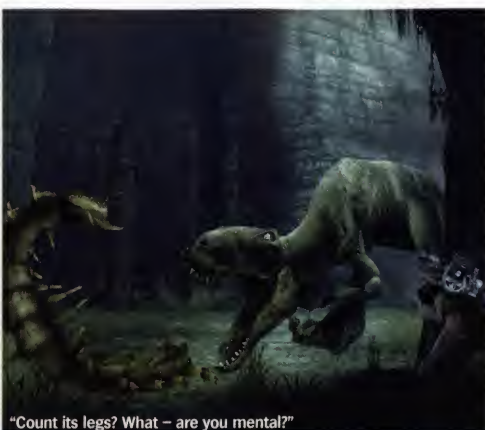
TRADING PLACES

As Matt Stone pointed out in the Michael Moore doco *Bowling for Columbine*, "if you look at peoples' lives, on a case by case basis, almost every single person's later life is the complete opposite of their school life." The kings of the schoolyard end up being the kings of the local Quik-E-Mart and the guys who had it tough in school end up with great careers as doctors, CEOs and videogame journalists. Just look at Matt Stone. He was the weird looking unpopular kid at the back of the class in school, but then he and his mate Trey Parker made *South Park* and now he earns more money than a small country and does the 'no pants dance' with Playboy playmates. Respect!

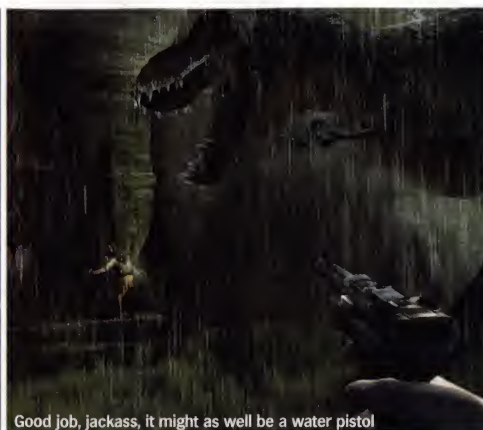




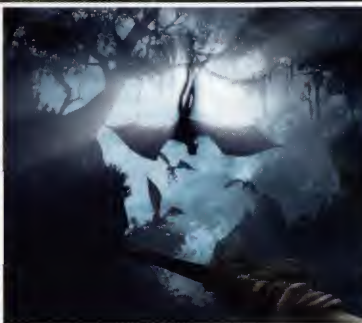
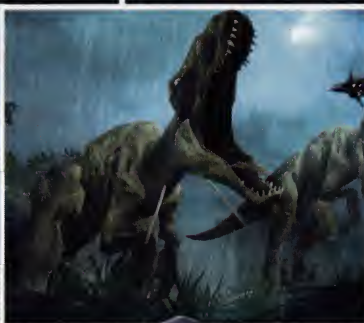
You don't need to be able to run faster than this dino – just faster than the guy beside you



"Count its legs? What – are you mental?"



Good job, jackass, it might as well be a water pistol



FPS/ADVENTURE

KING KONG

One hairy bloke we can't wait to get our hands on

PREVIEW PLAYERS: 1 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT ■ DEVELOPER: UBISOFT ■ WEB: www.ubi.com/au ■ LAST SEEN: OPS2 #42 ■ RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

There are a lot of 'so called' kings out there. Elvis was supposed to be 'The King' but he was just a chubby guy who liked to wear tight leather jumpsuits. Lame. And don't even get us started on Michael Jackson. The King of Pop? We all know what he wants to 'pop' and it's so far from cool it's not funny. In our book King Kong's the only real king... and that book is the Bible – Paul 25:17 "And Kong said unto the israelites, 'Yay, bring forth more bananas...'. Look it up if you don't believe us – it's in there!

Kong's new game is looking mightier than his 50ft biceps. Being based on the upcoming Peter Jackson blockbuster movie, the game splits the action between Jack Driscoll in FPS levels and Kong in smash-the-crap-out-of-anything-smaller-than-a-skyscraper levels.

The teeth-rattling demo we saw kicked off with Jack being untied by one of his mates a few seconds before he became a sacrifice buffet for the island's monsters. Miffed at having their pets' meal do a runner, the locals start lobbing spears at you. Control flicks to the player here, as you do your best to avoid becoming a shish-kebab in the shower of spears.

Around the next corner you stumble into a hungry velociraptor. After a few loud curses and a messy pant-soiling incident you grab one of the spears off the ground (that you dodged a second ago) and hurl it at the agro dino. Sharp, pointy sticks just make the velociraptor mad (go figure), and you find out the hard way how finger-sized teeth in the belly feel. Spitting

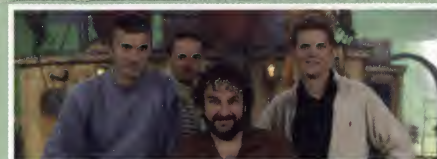
blood, you stumble into the refuge of some nearby temple ruins. Luckily, the gap you squeezed into proves to be too tight for your playpal's drool-dripping snout. Even more luckily, another of the island's freakshows stumbles along (a man-sized centipede) and takes a dislike to the velociraptor. The dino-fight gives you a chance to make a hasty retreat and catch up with your fellow adventurers.

The rest of the demo showed Jack and the gang rafting down a river, while you madly shoot at the T-rexes trying to chow down on you from the banks. The game changed completely in the next section as control switched to Kong. Instead of running from the T-rexes you now get to engage in some of the most visceral combat we've ever seen. The killer gorilla smacks them around a little, before catching their jaws mid-bite and tearing them apart. The next thing we hear is a horrific crunch as the T-rex suddenly goes limp. Nasty stuff.

That's just a brief run through the most shockingly impressive demo this side of *Killzone 2*. *King Kong* has explosive movie-style thrills that leave the opening scenes of previous jaw-droppers like *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* for dead, combined with FPS controls that are tighter than *TimeSplitters* and game design that's more fluid and creative than *Prince of Persia*. Make no mistake, *Kong* will be one of the best games of the year! Tristan, the lucky bastard, is in France playing the game at Ubi HQ right now, so expect a King Kong-sized exclusive next month! **Narayan Pattison**

THE JACKSON 4

Not that *King Kong* needs anything else going for it, but another big feather in its cap is Peter Jackson's (*The Lord of the Rings*) huge praise for the development team. During the planning stages of *King Kong* Jackson was playing Ubisoft's *Beyond Good & Evil*. He was so impressed with the game that he approached Ubisoft and asked to work directly with BG&E creator Michel Ancel on the videogame, turning his back on EA (creator of the *LOTR* games). Hollywood endorsing movie-licensed games is hardly new, but Peter Jackson has a lot more credibility than your average director, so we're inclined to trust him.



PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

KING KONG combines flawless cinematic effects with the most intuitive controls and concepts we've ever seen in an FPS. The first interactive movie has finally been created!



X ACTION

JAMES BOND: FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

EA is sharing a special Bond with us all

HANDS ON PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA ■ **DEVELOPER:** EA ■ **WEB:** www.eagames.com ■ **LAST SEEN:** OPS2 #42 ■ **RELEASE DATE:** NOVEMBER

For a few months now, Paul has been receiving mysterious packages in the mail with 'FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE' stamped on them. We just presumed that he was getting updates on the new James Bond game from EA – turns out they were actually mail order bride catalogues! He claims that "they must have got his contact details by accident", but we're not buying it (and neither is he, the Aussie dollar isn't doing too well against the Ruble at the moment).

One man who would never have to pay for his women is the original 007 himself, Sean Connery. He's been voted the world's sexiest man more times than Naz has been busted for indecent exposure at all-girl high schools, and even at the ripe old age of 74 he can still melt female hearts of all ages with the mere raise of an eyebrow.

From Russia with Love not only lets you look like Connery (circa 1963), but also deal out the one liners with his trademark shexy shpeech impediment thanks to brand new dialogue recorded by the man himself. Exotic locations from the film such as Russia, London and Istanbul all serve as backdrops to the action, which so far seems to consist of impressively cinematic set pieces similar to those featured in *Everything or Nothing*.

The jetpack was responsible for one of the biggest 'wow moments' in *GTA: San*

Andreas, so we're certainly pleased to hear it will be a big feature in the game (although Bond enthusiasts will know that the jetpack didn't even appear in *From Russia with Love*, and actually came later in the next Bond movie, *Thunderball*). At one point you even get to dogfight with jetpack-strapped enemies in the sky around London's Big Ben, which is certainly a more interesting way to visit tired old tourist attractions (we got drunk and passed out naked at the Big Pineapple once – it's kind of the same thing).

An improved aiming system means you can now target specific points on the enemy, such as the explosive grenade dangling from their utility belt. You'll also be able to fully customise your arsenal by choosing which weapons and gadgets to equip before each mission, and you can also upgrade them via reward points earned by performing stylish Bond moves during the action.

No word as to whether there'll be any RPG-style attributes included, but we're totally going to max out our 'misogynist meter' if there is one (it's what Bond would want). ♣ Tristan Ogilvie

FUN FACT!

From Russia with Love was the first film to reveal gadget man Q's real name, Major Boothroyd. Hmm, maybe having a single letter for a name wasn't such a crazy choice after all.

CLASSIC CONNERY COMEDY

Sean Connery's personal assistant has scheduled a meeting with some movie executives.
 "When's the meeting?" asks Connery.
 "This Friday morning" replies his assistant.
 "What time on Friday morning?" asks Connery.
 "Ten-ish" replies his assistant.
 "Ten-ish?" replies a bewildered Connery. "But I haven't even got a racquet!"



X PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE should cleanse the bitter *Rogue Agent* taste out of your gaming palate and steer the *Bond* franchise back towards the authentic direction it was taking with *Everything or Nothing*.

Pre-play



"Where'd you get those glasses, the toilet store?"



"Now all we need are some firecrackers"



"I'll shoot him in the ass - not the way Paul does it either"



✗ FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT

Way less pretentious than post-modern combat...

FIRST LOOK PLAYERS: 24 (ONLINE) ■ DISTRIBUTOR: EA ■ DEVELOPER: DICE ■ WEB: www.battlefield2.com ■ LAST SEEN: OPS2 #41 ■ RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Battlefield 2 was originally intended to be an online, multiplayer-only title, which would have killed the commercial reception of the game faster than a cyanide tablet. So it's just as well that developer DICE has delayed the release of the game, initially forecasted for the end of 2004, in order to stuff in an expansive single player campaign that's sure to enlist the attention of the mainstream punters as well the cathode ray-tanned online soldiers.

The single-player mode is built around the exact same engine as the online mode; meaning that all the multiplayer goodies will be available in the offline campaign. What goodies? Try 30 fully operational vehicles and more than 50 fully fireable weapons for you to get your hands dirty with. There are more instruments of death in *Battlefield 2* than on the bridal registry for the wedding of George W. Bush and John Rambo (don't judge, it's perfectly legal in Canada).

The conflict is based in Kazakhstan, an unstable region torn apart by US, European Union, Chinese and Middle Eastern forces. During the 30 single player missions you'll be able to fight on either side of the conflict, and in numerous character classes including Assault, Support, Special Ops, Engineer and Sniper. You'll even be able to change classes on the fly (see 'RED HOT SWAP').

What's really impressed us about *Modern Combat* so far is the glorious intensity of the combat. You can leave your tranquilliser darts and felt-soled shoes at home; stealth is not an option on this battlefield. A point system has been implemented that rewards the speed with which enemies are dispatched, as well as offering bonuses for headshots and multiple kills, and at the end of each mission the points are tallied up and then used to unlock character upgrades and buy more advanced equipment.

There are two modes of play in the online multiplayer, capture the flag and conquest, with support for up to a whopping 24 players. It may seem like a fairly limited choice of gameplay types compared to competing titles in the FPS genre, but when you factor in the variety of boats, helicopters, jeeps and vast landscapes packed with towering vertical structures, you're guaranteed to never play the same match twice. *Battlefield 2* is shaping up to be a war that had to happen; and it may well usher in a new era for military-based FPS games on the PS2. Start polishing those boots soldier. **Tristan Ogilvie**

FUN FACT!

Developer DICE released its first game in 1992 for the Commodore Amiga. Turns out, the Commodore Amiga wasn't a car after all - kinda like the New Beetle.

RED HOT SWAP

'Hot swappable' is the term we use to refer to Paul's girlfriend when she gets drunk at parties, but apparently it's also an expression to describe the swapping of characters 'on the fly' during the single-player combat in *Battlefield 2*. At any moment during combat you can transfer control to an ally, provided they're within eyesight. Your Agent Smith fantasies are about to be realised!



✗ PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

80%

BATTLEFIELD 2: MODERN COMBAT features a first for the series; a refreshingly original single-player mode that you'll actually want to experience.



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fun,
anyone?
PlayStation.2

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Pre-play



This reminds us of Phill, he has pussy following him all the time too



This kid is well overdue for a shave



"Go on, pull my finger"



RPG

FINAL FANTASY XII

Time to fantasise about pretty girls and chocobos again

FIRST LOOK PLAYERS: 1 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: TBC ■ DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX ■ WEB: www.ff12.com ■ LAST SEEN: OPS2 #42 ■ RELEASE DATE: TBC

Final Fantasy has never been just another game to throw into your PS2 and play for a couple of hours. It's always been an experience that you immerse yourself in for weeks at a time. *Final Fantasy XII* will be no different. However, that's the only thing that'll it has in common with the rest of the series. Everything else is gone, gone, gone.

For starters the camera is no longer fixed in the worst position possible. It's now fully rotational and can be moved on the fly. If you're not happy with the view you're getting of *FFXII*'s leading lady Penelo's abilities, you can just flick the right analogue stick for a better peek.

That's just the beginning though. The combat system from previous games has also been hurled on the scrap heap like an unwanted Christmas present. The new system, known as Gambit, allows you to give commands to your AI buddies instead of going through the lists of every single character to find the smartest move. For example, you can now have one member of your party mirror every command you do or order them to only execute defensive moves to protect the group. You can even have them act as a medic on the battlefield, reviving your health any time your character starts seeing the white light at the end of the tunnel.

There are so many options and combinations to choose from you could spend hours organising your 'A team'. You'll be putting in the hours regardless, because strategy is going to be vital to survive the combat in *Final Fantasy XII*. You'll need

to mix things up more than ever, and knowing when to use short and long distance attacks will be the only way to keep foes off balance.

Perhaps the biggest change to the series though is the absence of the random battles, which should be considered the best news since *Grand Theft Auto* for PSP. We lost count of how many times we cringed whenever the screen would shatter and leave us staring at some hideous beast resembling Tristan at 9am without a coffee. In *Final Fantasy XII* you will now see your enemy as you're traveling and can decide whether or not to run for the mountains or kick some ass. Obviously it's good to pick a fight every now and then, but at least now you have the option to avoid a confrontation if your team's stats are dangerously low.

After 11 games that played almost identically, it looks like *Final Fantasy XII* has 'finally' made a serious evolution. In short, *FFXII* looks great, plays even more intuitively and, best of all, it'll give us a chance to swoop in and date your girlfriend while you're busy putting in the long hours on your PS2. Talk about ticking every box off. The only downside is that we don't know how long we'll have to hold out for. We're sure it'll be worth the wait though. ♣ Paul Frew

FUN FACT!

If you love those little chocobos so much then you can go to www.cavesofmarnshe.com to adopt one.

WE CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S NOT YUNA

We know what you're thinking, "Awesome, Yuna is in *Final Fantasy XII*". We're sorry to crush your fantasy but even though this hottie here looks like the babe from *Final Fantasy X* and *Final Fantasy X-2*, she's not. Let us introduce you to Ashe. Ashe is the princess of the Damaska Kingdom. Her father was killed at the hands of the Empire and she's the only heir to the throne. She's been missing since the end of the war and has formed a resistance group in order to take down the Empire. Now, if only the battle could take place in a pool of KY Jelly then our final fantasy would have come true.



PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

FINAL FANTASY XII delivers an entirely new Final Fantasy experience and it's all offline. It'll be an entirely new game with brand new elements unlike anything you've ever seen in an RPG.



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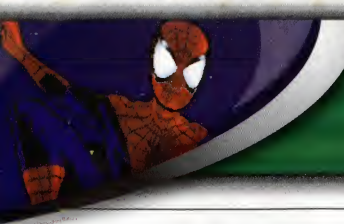
PlayStation 2

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Pre-play



Picking up chicks is never a problem for Spider-Man (it's the tights)



Spider-Man - pictured outside the head office of Crosswords Inc.



"Oh no! It's Rhino, and he looks horny!"



Back tentacles - embarrassing but easily fixed with laser surgery



FUN FACT!

2.15 million children dressed up in Spider-Man costumes for Halloween in the US in 2004. Approximately no one dressed up as Daredevil, for fear of being mistaken for Ben Affleck.

ACTION

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN

Fun with Mary Jane, without the munchies

HANDS ON PLAYERS: 1 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION ■ DEVELOPER: ACTIVISION ■ WEB: www.activision.com ■ LAST SEEN: OPS2 #42 ■ RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Activision's *Spider-Man 2* really set a new standard for the superhero genre. Sure the gameplay may have been a tad repetitive at times, but it did a brilliant job of allowing you to fully enjoy the benefits of having freaky web-slinging powers. Leaping off the top of the Empire State building and swinging hundreds of metres down to skip along the tops of taxi cabs in the streets below was an experience that always left you wanting more, so it's good news we don't have to wait for the next Spidey film in order to enjoy a new Peter Parker adventure.

Ultimate Spider-Man is based on the comic book series of the same name, and will allow you to not only play as the sticky fingered hero but also as the shadowy villain in alternating levels (see 'Appetite for destruction'). Unlike the attempted realism of *Spider-Man 2*, the new game will feature stylish cel-shaded visuals based off sketches drawn by the actual comic book artist, and will also feature dialogue written by the comic book's creator.

The environment will expand on the already massive Manhattan Island featured in the last game, allowing you to venture all the way out to Aunt May's house and Peter Parker's high school; effectively giving you a better view of Queens than George Michael's bedroom mirror. Rather than try and remedy the awkward camera angles from the indoor levels in *Spider-Man 2*, the developers have scrapped indoor sections completely - which seems a little

disappointing but on the bright side it should ensure a better flowing, free-roaming experience if all the action occurs outdoors.

We're promised that the 'civilians in distress' from the previous game will be much more randomised this time - we're pretty sure we're not the only ones who got tired of the always-dangling construction workers or the kids with the lost balloons that littered the landscape of *Spider-Man 2*. One of the more exciting situations we've seen so far depicted a woman trapped under a flaming, overturned car. As the friendly neighbourhood superhero you must swing down, alternately tap the shoulder buttons to lift the car and toss it to one side before grabbing the girl and webbing her to a nearby ambulance.

Just make sure you change your clothes afterwards though - claiming you're a superhero is not really a convincing way of explaining those suspicious white web stains on your pants. **Tristan Ogilvie**

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN is going to allow you to zip around New York until the streets are full of more cobwebs than a nun's habit. The choice to make Venom playable is a treat for fans and should provide some welcome variety to the gameplay too.

APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

When you're not saving citizens with that goody two-shoes Spider-Man, you'll be tearing up the neighbourhood with violent villain, Venom. Instead of swinging around the place on webs you'll be leaping from rooftops like the Incredible Hulk, flipping over cars with ease and generally causing as much mayhem as possible. The Venom suit actually feeds off its host, Eddie Brock, so in order to stay alive you must snatch civilians and drag them into the suit, absorbing their life energy, vampire-style. Fancy that - a soul-sapping suit? Probably the same as the ones Donald Trump wears.





"Is that a sign saying deer ahead? Get my gun"



"Pfft, you call this fast?"



FUN FACT!

The storyline and dialogue in *Crash Tag Team Racing* is being penned by Jordan Reicheck, the same oddball behind *Crash Twinsanity* and much loved cartoon series, *Ren and Stimpy*.

RACING

CRASH TAG TEAM RACING

The aging mascot rides again ...

HAND ONS PLAYERS: 1-8 ■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** VIVENDI ■ **DEVELOPER:** RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT ■ **WEB:** www.radical-entertainment.com ■ **LAST SEEN:** FIRST-LOOK ■ **RELEASE DATE:** OCTOBER

Though the kart racing genre is often the last resort for the cheap cartoon licence cash-in, it's been utilised with mostly impressive results by PlayStation stalwart Crash Bandicoot in both *Crash Team Racing* on the PSone and the subsequent *Crash Nitro Kart* on the PS2. However *Crash Tag Team Racing* is no ordinary kart racer – it's fusing the fundamentals of the genre with classic platform game components.

The game begins with Crash on foot in a bizarre, amusement park-style environment where he can collect fruit that litters the landscape and interact with the peculiar inhabitants. It's pretty standard platform gaming in this section, and overall it

basically acts as a hub for the various racing missions you'll be taking part in.

The racing itself is surprisingly difficult at first, mainly because the Tag Team or 'clashing' element is like nothing we've ever seen before in a game of this type. Basically, each car in the race has the ability to possess any other vehicle that happens to be nearby, causing the two vehicles to physically merge. The character that initialised the clash then pops out in a gun turret on the back of the newly-sandwiched buggy, and can then take out destructible roadside objects and, of course, other racers.

Multiplayer fans take note – in *CTTR* you can link two consoles together to have a total of eight players

per race. Co-operative race modes are a likely inclusion, which should add extra strategy to races and make clashing a noticeable feature for all the right reasons (unlike your shirt which totally doesn't go with those pants). ▶ **Tristan Ogilvie**

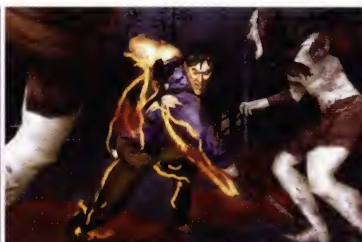
PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

80%

CRASH TAG TEAM RACING provides a unique new spin on a fairly tired genre. The Tag Team element is a particularly addictive new addition.



"Hail to the Kings, baby!"



Now he's got Colorado imprinted on his balls



ACTION/ADVENTURE

EVIL DEAD REGENERATION

Good? Bad? He's the one with the gun

FIRST LOOK PLAYERS: 1 ■ **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ ■ **DEVELOPER:** CRANKY PANTS ■ **WEB:** www.evildead3.com/ ■ **LAST SEEN:** OPS2 #41 ■ **RELEASE DATE:** SEPTEMBER

Been pining for a little more Ash? Although his previous appearance on PS2 in *A Fistful of Boomstick* wasn't exactly revolutionary, it wasn't bad for a game that retailed for \$29.95. Well, if you thought you'd seen the last of the cult hero and his remarkably formed chin, think again. Ashley J. Williams is back, again voiced by Bruce Campbell – and if you're an *Evil Dead* fan you'll know what we mean when we say it's looking mighty groovy.

Described as the 'spiritual successor' to the film *Evil Dead 2: Dead by Dawn*, *Evil Dead Regeneration* sees Ash convicted of murder and sent to Sunny Meadows, an institute for the criminally insane. However, deep in the basement the mad Dr. Vingo Reinhard is working to

harness the Necronomicon, the Book of the Dead, and its powers. Cue masses of evil Deadites.

From what we've seen, Cranky Pants has bolted together a solid combat system for Ash to dispatch the waves of Deadites he encounters. There'll be a swag of combos to master as well over a dozen brutal finishing moves. You'll have your trusty chainsaw and 12-gauge available from the start (S-Mart's top of the line. You can find it in the sporting goods department), and by building a special rage meter you'll be able to transform into Evil Ash and saw an unstoppable swathe through the undead menace.

Furious, blood-gushing action and the B-grade humour we love? Give us some sugar, baby! ▶ **Luke Reilly**

FUN FACT!

Another new feature is Ash's sidekick, Sam – an infinitely regenerative, three foot tall walking corpse, voiced by director Sam Raimi's (*Evil Dead*, *Spider-Man*) brother Ivan.

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

80%

EVIL DEAD REGENERATION is aiming to be the first Evil Dead game since THQ scooped up the license to really nail the B-grade hilarity that gave the films their cult status.

Pre-play



✗ FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN

Totally different to getting a Blonde Bird Down at the pub...

HANDS ON PLAYERS: 1-32 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI ■ DEVELOPER: NOVALOGIC ■ WEB: www.blackhawkdownthegame.com ■ LAST SEEN: FIRST-LOOK ■ RELEASE DATE: AUGUST

You've possibly read the book, probably seen the film starring Eric 'Don't make me angry' Bana and maybe even played the 2003 PC game of the same name. Now developer NovaLogic is bringing the well-documented real-life conflict to the PS2. And not only that, it's also facilitating massive multiplayer battles for an unprecedented 32 players online.

Rather than merely provide a straight port of the PC version, *Delta Force: Black Hawk Down* has been rebuilt from the ground up for the PS2. While the PC version focused first and foremost on long distance sniper battles over expansive environments, the PS2 edition has been scaled down and packed with more enemies. So while the battlefield may be slightly smaller, there's a greater focus on close-quarter combat in this version.

Controlling your combatant couldn't be simpler, particularly if you've ever played any other PS2 FPS in the past. There are buttons for firing, zooming your scope and throwing grenades, as well as peeking around corners and switching your stance to both ducking and lying prone.

The single-player campaign closely follows the events that occurred in Mogadishu in August 1993. One of the early missions sees the first Black Hawk being shot down over the city, separating you from your fellow American soldiers and forcing you to fight your way through the streets.

Occasionally you'll stumble upon your comrades, and at these points you can get them to follow you and form a makeshift squad. From then on you can give them orders to provide ammunition, health packs or bursts of cover fire.

There are also a few 'on-rails' moments, such as when you board a moving vehicle and operate a mounted machine gun. These sections really show off the graphics and physics engines at work in *Black Hawk Down*, as enemy trucks flip over and explode into fiery chunks of scrap metal under your deafening hail of bullets.

Exclusive to the PS2 version of *Black Hawk Down* is an upgrade system that allows you to improve your soldier depending on mission performance. Categories that can be improved include marksmanship for targeting accuracy, dexterity for faster movements, endurance for stronger health, and leadership which directly affects how quickly teammates respond to orders.

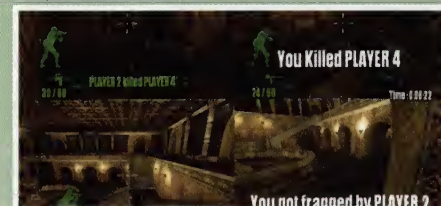
We're yet to get our hands on the online portion of the game, but the basic ingredients are all there, so by the looks of it *Delta Force: Black Hawk Down* could well be one of the most realistic online PS2 FPSs yet. **Tristan Ogilvie**

FUN FACT!

Eric Bana played Norm Gibson, a soldier out to find an ill-fated chopper in the *Black Hawk Down* movie. It's not the first time he's been in a film about an ill-fated Chopper.

BROADBAND DOWN

While the online component of *Black Hawk Down* is certainly a big selling feature, fear not if the only broadband you have is the one holding up your underpants; there's plenty of split-screen fun to be had too. There are ten co-op missions and seven other multiplayer modes such as King of the Hill, Capture the Flag and the usual Deathmatch. Add that to the 16 missions of single player and you've got a rather lengthy offline tour of duty.



✗ PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN hopes to provide a gritty look at the hellish nature of modern warfare. Rather than limit its appeal, the online component should only serve to enhance the already strong offline package.

**“You haven’t owned a computer until
you own an Alienware.”**



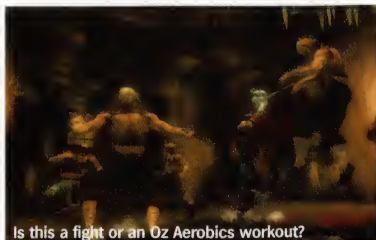
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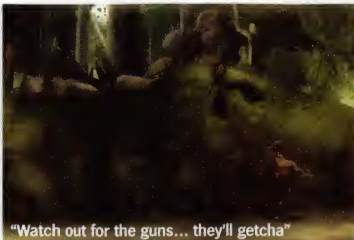
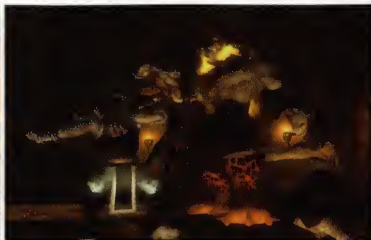
ALIENWARE 
HIGH-PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS



Pre-play



Is this a fight or an Oz Aerobics workout?



"Watch out for the guns... they'll getcha"



✗ BEAT 'EM UP

MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS

These monks meditate... THEN KILL!

HANDS ON PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT ■ DEVELOPER: MIDWAY ■ WEB: <http://mkmonks.com> ■ LAST SEEN: FIRST-LOOK ■ RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

Though the series has achieved its greatest success as a one-on-one fighter, the developer of *Mortal Kombat* has never been afraid of exploring other genres and encapsulating them within its own blood soaked franchise. The most recent example of this was the chess, RPG and puzzle add-ons in 2004's *Mortal Kombat: Deception*.

Now the team at Midway is readying *Mortal Kombat: Shaolin Monks*; a *Double Dragon*-style scrolling beat 'em up packed with all the characters and gory trimmings that made the series so appealing in the first place.

Players can tackle the story mode on their own or with a friend in the role of either Liu Kang or

Kung Lao, each with their own repertoire of attacks. Combos, juggling and the trademark fatality moves are much simpler to achieve than they are in the traditional game, ensuring a fast-paced and free-flowing combat experience.

Environmental Interactivity is one of the more enticing features, as it allows you to finish opponents by shoving them into acid pits, impaling them on spiked ceilings or hanging them nose-first on hooks. There's even all-new 'Multititles' that send out room-clearing waves of destruction, obliterating multiple enemies at once (and unless *Cosmo* is lying to us, multiple times is always better). **✎ Tristan Ogilvie**

FUN FACT!

You're right, Liu Kang is as dead as Holly Valance's singing career, but *MKSM* is set during the events of *Mortal Kombat II*.

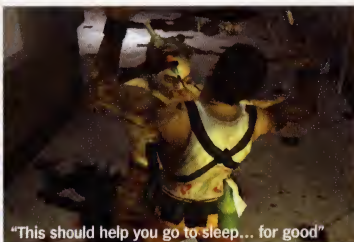
✗ PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

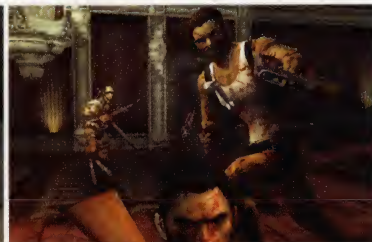
MORTAL KOMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS is a relentless beat 'em up adventure that incorporates all of the very best elements from the MK franchise.



Mmmmm... barbecue



"This should help you go to sleep... for good"



✗ ACTION

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND

A bit like being handcuffed to the bed (ask Naz)

HANDS ON PLAYERS: 1 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT ■ DEVELOPER: SURREAL SOFTWARE ■ WEB: <http://sufferingtiesthatbind.com> ■ LAST SEEN: FIRST-LOOK ■ RELEASE DATE: SEPTEMBER

The *Suffering* was a surprisingly absorbing action-horror title full of bad language, disturbing imagery and gripping gameplay that only occasionally lost its momentum. The sequel, *Ties That Bind*, picks up where the original left off and sees you regain control of the psychologically and spiritually tormented felon Torque, as he attempts to seek revenge against the mysterious villain Caleb Blackmore.

During our brief hands on with the game, we were able to coordinate a prison riot and subsequent jailbreak, dealing out damage to anyone in our path with a shotgun nabbed from a fallen guard. Fortunately Torque can now crouch to enter ventilation shafts or

take cover behind inanimate objects, and coupled with an improved jumping ability he's altogether a much easier character to control.

Like the original game, you'll once again be able to determine through your actions whether Torque becomes good or evil, and if you've finished the previous adventure you can save time by popping in your memory card and resuming your moral alignment. Whether you're good or bad, you can still enter Rage Mode and literally transform into a near invincible beast that can tear fleshy strips off your enemies. Well, you'd be mad too if you were named after that horrible Ice Cube motorcycling movie. Talk about suffering... **✎ Tristan Ogilvie**

FUN FACT!

In every game developed by Surreal Software you are able to use a chicken as a weapon. *Ties That Bind* will be no different.

✗ PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

90%

THE SUFFERING: TIES THAT BIND retains the shocking imagery and chilling audio of the original and improves the controls to the point that it should be hard to put down.





"Do I LOOK like I have change for a dollar?"



"Go on, beg! Frankly, I don't give a dime"



X ACTION

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF

Gettin' rich or dyin' tryin'

FIRST LOOK PLAYERS: 1 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI ■ DEVELOPER: GENUINE GAMES ■ WEB: www.the50centgame.com ■ LAST SEEN: OPS2 #39 ■ RELEASE DATE: 2006

The scariest thing about *50 Cent: Bulletproof* is that 50 is claiming this is a fantasy version of his life. Some people dream of getting rich and retiring in the Bahamas with a Swedish trophy bride, not capping asses, dude. First music, then movies and games? 50 Cent is like a bad penny – he's showing up everywhere.

Written by Emmy-Award winning *Sopranos* executive producer Terry Winter, *50 Cent: Bulletproof* is an all action, third-person lead-fest where 50 Cent wages war on New York's drug underworld.

He won't just be slinking around wearing nothing but a sneer and a pair of oversized pants, 50 will have a number of athletic moves at his disposal in order to

dodge, weave and thrash his way through waves of gat-gripping gangstas and homie henchmen.

50 has been heavily involved in the game's production recording hours of dialogue, consulting on the mechanics and story and recording original tunes for the soundtrack.

50 Cent: Bulletproof will also feature a lineup of 50's peers, including G Unit's Tony Yayo, Lloyd Banks and Young Buck, as well as Eminem and Dr. Dre as characters McVicar and Grizz.

We've known 50 Cent ever since he was just a shiny young quarter, so we're pretty interested to see how this one turns out (man, we hope that last bit doesn't get us shot by Mr. Cent's associates). **♣ Luke Reilly**

FUN FACT!

We doubt they'll admit it, but Genuine Games was also behind the *Fight Club* game – disrespectful crap that tarnished a cult classic. At least there's nowhere for them to go but up.

X PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

40%

50 CENT: BULLETPROOF is still a long way off, but we're expecting hip-hop and handguns a'plenty. Fingers crossed that 50 doesn't get shot a tenth time before its release.



Damn van...



This car spends more time sideways than Paul's sister



X RACING

L.A. RUSH

Fo' shizzle ma nizzle...

FIRST LOOK PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT ■ DEVELOPER: MIDWAY ■ WEB: www.midway.com ■ LAST SEEN: FIRST-LOOK ■ RELEASE DATE: OCTOBER

Take one cup of *Burnout 3: Takedown*, mix with a generous amount of *Pimp My Ride*, add a dash of hardcore gangsta and a pinch of Orlando Jones and Twista. Pop it in the oven on high speed and bake for about six months.

Sounds tasty? Midway is betting it's a recipe for success as it unveils *L.A. Rush*, the resurrection of its arcade racing *Rush* series. Boasting breakneck speeds, massive airtime, enough nitrous to put your dentist out of business, and a gritty attitude that says "Brother, I'm from the West-siiide!", this little bad boy is rolling into yo' town later this year.

From what we saw, it manages to convey an incredibly visceral sense of speed while remaining

super-glossy and spunkier than Katie Holmes. It's easy to pick up too, just like the women at Paul's favourite bar (especially on 'Over Fifties Fridays').

The emphasis isn't just on racing; but stealing, modifying and pimping over 50 tricked-out rides designed exclusively by West Coast Customs and *Rides Magazine*. Race events take place all over Los Angeles – from Hollywood to South Central and over to Santa Monica (not Lewinsky – that's a whole other ride).

You better buff that chrome, step correct and represent playa, or else you better check yo'self before you wreck yo'self busta (now excuse us while we ask the kid down the street to translate exactly what the hell we just said). **♣ Dave Kozicki**

FUN FACT!

The upcoming *Midway Arcade Treasures 3* will feature two of the previous *Rush* games – *San Francisco Rush The Rock: Alcatraz Edition* (1997) and *San Francisco Rush 2049* (1999)!

X PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

L.A. RUSH is hardly the most original sounding street racing game, but we're willing to bet Midway will be able to provide some solidly speedy thrills.

THE SIMPLE LIFE

WORDS: PAUL FREW

Put in your annual leave or come up with some serious sickie excuses because *The Sims* are back and this time they're taking no prisoners!

So you sent your audition tape to *Big Brother* where you skulled a case of tinnies and scored with a supermodel, yet you're still at home watching a guy named Hotdogs and a sheep shearer score night after night, after night. So what do you do now? You could jump the security fence, sneak into the house and see if anyone notices. You could also try kidnapping Gretel and holding her as ransom until you get inside. Or you could just snap a photo of yourself with your EyeToy and put yourself in the next best thing to the *Big Brother* house, *The Sims 2*.

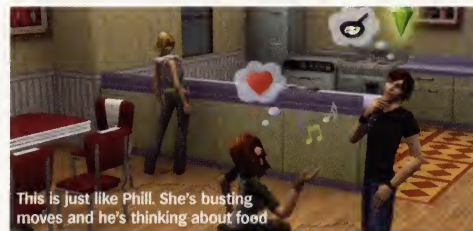
Life inside *The Sims 2* is very similar to life inside the *Big Brother* house. You'll have goals and aspirations to fulfill, socialising to do with Sims you've never met before and you'll get up to loads of crazy shenanigans at night that you'll regret the next morning. Your Sim's goals will be split up into immediate goals, which can be anything from updating furniture to getting a job, and long-term goals like getting married or owning a house.

The immediate goals can be completed like the tasks in the original *The Sims* and *Busting Out*, but the long-term goals are a little more complex. You'll need to fulfill several tasks to achieve the big one. Some of these will be immediate goals that only take a few days to complete, while others will take years out of your Sim's schedule. You can still reach the goal by only achieving only some

of the tasks but the more you complete then the more satisfied your Sim will be with their life. For example, say you're an Anna Nicole Smith type Sim who's only goal in life is to bag herself a filthy rich husband. To achieve this then you'll need to complete tasks like getting in to high profile parties, maintaining a large savings account and owning only the most expensive clothing and furniture money can buy. If Anna is able to do all this then she could wind up with someone like Prince William, rich and handsome. However if she only completes some of these tasks then she could be waking up next to someone like Bill Gates. We know, it makes us queasy thinking about it too. Moving on...

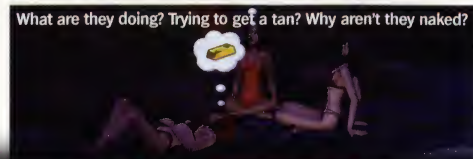
Socialising is perhaps the biggest difference from previous *Sims* games. When you come into contact with another Sim, the camera will zoom in on your conversation like a paparazzi in the bushes so you can read the other Sim's expressions. Getting along with another Sim involves a lot more than just selecting 'make a joke, entertain, hug, kiss' like before. You'll have to do a Mel Gibson in *What Woman Want* and listen to the thoughts of the Sim you're talking to if you them to be your friend rather than foe. This is really easy to do thanks to the expressions they give off. Other Sims won't just smile if they're happy or frown if they're unhappy. They'll stand close to you when flirting, yawn if you're boring them, stand with their arms crossed if they're unimpressed and not even make eye contact with you if they don't care what tripe you're spitting out. There are so many different expressions that you'll be amazed at how lifelike they really are. Everything you do and say to the other Sims will stay with them too, as all the characters in

This is what Luke saw that time he drank a bottle of brake fluid



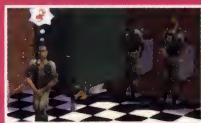
This is just like Phill. She's busting moves and he's thinking about food

What are they doing? Trying to get a tan? Why aren't they naked?



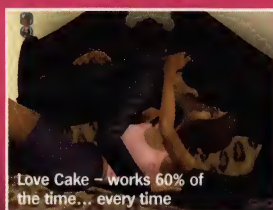
COOKING UP A STORM

There are so many food ingredients in *The Sims 2* that there are literally millions of combinations of recipes you can concoct. Here's two of our favourites:



Squid Shake: The squid shake is not as bad as it sounds. It will fill your Sim's hunger levels and boost their energy levels too. However, it will also lower their bladder and make them a little under the weather. One of the funny things you can do is take out all the toilets in the game and watch the fun start. It's a bit of a mess to clean up, though.

Love Cake: Used by celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, Tom Cruise and Paris Hilton, this baked good has an aphrodisiac quality to it. One bite and you'll be ready for some afternoon delight. The only problem is that it doesn't come with a partner.



Love Cake - works 60% of the time... every time

The Sims 2 have memories - like they do in the upcoming *The Godfather*. So if you piss one off you better sleep with one eye open. Then again, if you flaunt your charm and they become interested in you, you can just drop the pants and start with the baby-making.

This leads us to the nightlife in *The Sims 2*. Just like on *Big Brother Uncut* its got the three R's. Raunchy, risqué and really hot. There'll be the ever popular sauna ready for some deep sea diving, toga parties with beer kegs and late-night streaking, and nightclubs where you can score with people half your age. You'll also be able to set up and run your own nightclub if that's been your lifelong dream. This includes decking it out with some of the 125 items available for purchase, including everything from the latest DJ booths to our personal favourite, go-go dancer cages. It's a tough business to run as you'll have to continually keep up with fashion trends to draw crowds, play the latest and most popular tunes and keep your parties pumping all night long so your customers don't fall asleep (like Naz does after three beers). It's almost an entire game in itself. There's plenty to see outside your house, so it's worth exploring to appreciate just how big *The Sims 2* really is.

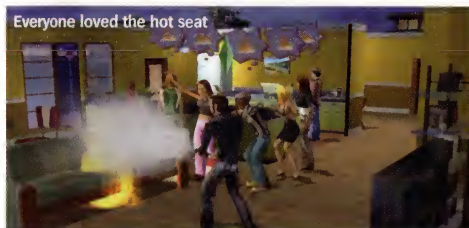
We've only just scraped the bottom of the barrel in regards to what's in *The Sims 2*. There's still the career system, the chemistry system and lots of other features that would take the entire magazine to cover. The PC version didn't sell 5 million copies because it got lucky. Just like in *GTA: San Andreas*, there's so much to do it'll probably take you months before you discover half of what it has to offer. So don't feel too bad about missing out on getting drunk with a bunch of hot babes in *Big Brother*. There's always next year, and there's always *The Sims 2*. ♣



"That's not what we meant when we asked if you could handle three at once"



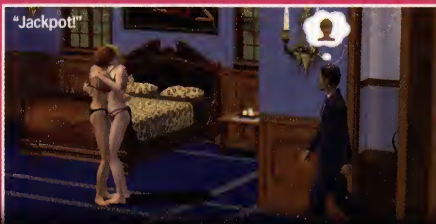
"Hey ladies. Don't act like you're not impressed"



Everyone loved the hot seat

TAG TEAM

Much like the previous *Sims* games you'll be able to play through *The Sims 2* with a mate. No word if you can play online, but we know there'll definitely be a split-screen option. In this mode both Sims will have individual goals but there'll also be times when you need to work together to complete a certain task. So it won't be identical to the single player campaign. You could even play as twins like David and Greg from *Big Brother* but maybe change them from a couple of country boys to the Barbie twins. That's how we roll!



"Jackpot!"

REAL LIFE SIM

How can anyone forget Gianna from *Big Brother*? She was funny, athletic and totally hot. Everyone compared her to Lara Croft and we can definitely see the resemblance. After *Big Brother*, she not only knows what it's like being a tomb raider but also a real life Sim. We caught up with her to find out what that's like.

OPS2: How was life in the *Big Brother* house?

Gianna: It was very difficult for me. You have to continually remind yourself that you're not in your own house. You're in *Big Brother*'s house and you have to abide by his rules. Then there's a bunch of people that you've never met before and you have no idea what they're like so you do your best to get along with them. But if you don't get along or you just want time to yourself then there's no escape. You've got nowhere to go. So it was a very unique experience for me.

OPS2: *The Sims 2* is very similar to life inside the *Big Brother* house and is every bit as popular as the TV show. Why do you think a game based on reality is so popular?

Gianna: I think people like being a fly on the wall and watching people's reaction to different situations. There's no acting at all and it's all so believable. The [player] can relate to it because it's so real.

OPS2: So if you were creating a Sim would you base it on yourself or would you create a made-up character?

Gianna: I'd base it on myself because there are games out there that have those made-up characters in them. If I wanted to play a game like that then I would. So I'd definitely try and relate it to me.

OPS2: You'll be *Big Brother* in the game telling your Sim what to do and when to do it. What type of *Big Brother* will you be?

Gianna: I'd definitely be very easy going. I won't be too harsh on my Sims if they do something wrong.

OPS2: What did you think of the tasks you had to complete?

Gianna: I'm very competitive so I loved the tasks. These weren't your everyday tasks like cleaning a room or something like that. They were just right out of left field so I had to adapt quite a bit to do them.

OPS2: Goals are an important part of *The Sims 2*, what were your goals going into the house?

Gianna: I wanted to at least last a month and I got close enough. I also just wanted to be myself.

OPS2: Does that mean being like Lara Croft?

Gianna: I kind of got categorised there because I ride motorcycles, do abseiling, martial arts etc. But I didn't get to do any Lara type moves in the house.

OPS2: What are your aspirations now you're out of the house?

Gianna: I want to get into film as an actress and I also want to get involved in animal rescue as it's something I'm very passionate about.

Gianna was also evicted from Naz's house after she refused to play *Burnout 3*



Image courtesy of Endemol Southern Star Pty Ltd



GUN

SON OF A GUN

WORDS: MICHAEL BUTLER

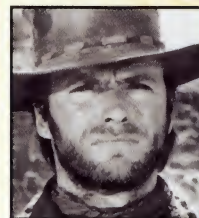


"He is not going to see this one coming"

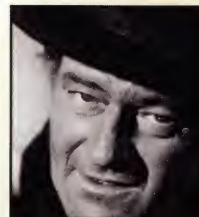


"So just a little bit off the top?"

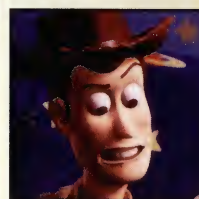
KNOW YOUR COWBOY



CLINT EASTWOOD – One of the greatest actors of all time, Clint Eastwood rose to stardom in Sergio Leone's *Man with No Name* spaghetti western trilogy. The Oscar-winning actor wore the same poncho without ever washing it in all three films. Interestingly, the name Clint Eastwood is an anagram for 'old west action'. Whoa...



JOHN WAYNE – The king of screen cowboys, the Duke holds the record for the actor with the most leading roles – 142. In all but 11 films he played the leading man. He once made a cameo appearance on *The Beverly Hillbillies* and when asked how he wanted to be paid he replied, "Give me a fifth of bourbon – that'll square it."



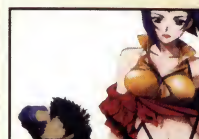
WOODY – A kid friendly cowboy (no, not the kid 'friendly' cowboys that help you onto the camels at the circus), Woody is a pint-sized hero with a pull-string. You could say his companion Buzz is a bit of a space cowboy, but we advise against it – there are no cows in space (except, of course, the Telaxian Fighting Cow).



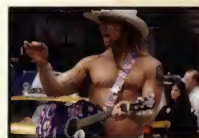
DALLAS COWBOYS – With five Superbowl victories out of eight appearances, the last in 1996, the Dallas Cowboys are one of the NFL's more formidable teams. By the way, they're not really cowboys – we don't think they ride horses and it appears they've never actually shot anyone.



MIDNIGHT COWBOY – One of the few films in the "male prostitution drama featuring Jon Voight" genre, 'cowboy' Joe Buck moves to New York City from Texas to make his fortune servicing rich Park Avenue women. And when we say servicing, we mean having freaky sex.



COWBOY BEBOP – A well-liked cult anime series featuring easy-going bounty hunters, women with enormous breasts and a super-intelligent Welsh Corgi. It's essentially a futuristic western, only without horses. Or the west.



SINGING COWBOY – We really didn't want to put this guy in but Paul insisted. If you're into weird dudes who play guitar in their undies and want to chat with him, ring Paul – we're sure he's got a contact number.

"We were looking for a new project... Western movies used to be huge - where have they gone?"



"Give me back my PSP"

"You've got a bunch of guys who are twenty and what are they going to do? Let's go into town and drink some whiskey! Everybody's got guns. What do you think is going to happen? Somebody's going to get f#ing hurt, that's what's going to happen."

Joel Jewett, President of Neversoft, certainly has a way with words. At one of Activision's pre-E3 events, attended exclusively by *OPS2*, he was hosting a selection of the world's gaming media for the first-ever look at *Gun*, an all-new action game. Neversoft was in the enviable position of having made its name, its fame and its fortune on the back of the ridiculously popular *Tony Hawk* games. Without turning its back on the series, it was time to try something new.

"We were looking for a new project. What material could be inspiring and fun to make? The American West. Western movies used to be huge – where have they gone?"

It's a good question. In the course of answering it, the crew at Neversoft found its new game. The Wild West, as most of us think of it, is the period, roughly, of 1860–1880. It encompasses the entirety of the American Civil War (1862–1865), Westward expansion, gold rushes, Indian wars, railway construction, cattle barons, immigration, post-war reconstruction and more. In short, it's a period rich in dramatic conflict and iconic characters,

landscapes and stories. "Holy shit," said Jewett, "this is frickin' videogame material if I've ever seen it." But what kind of game would it inspire? *Gun* is "a brutally realistic action-adventure game set in the Wild West. Bloody, violent and pretty adult-oriented."

This seemed to get his blood up, so before we could continue, Jewett treated us to a demonstration of the scalping technique. Simulated, of course. Once you've got an enemy down, you grab a handful of hair, cut a rough circle around its base with your knife (Jewett's was very large, more a small sword than a knife; "my wife gives me a knife every anniversary"), put your foot on your victim's chest and give a hearty yank. Then there's a horrible snapping sound as the skin and hair come free. The practice was started by the white man but soon taken to heart by the Indians as they fought to preserve their way of life. We got the feeling that Jewett really likes to go deep into his subject matter...

"When we got into our research we realised we needed to tell a big, epic story. The West is a big place and we want to make you feel like you're playing a Western movie."

CAMPFIRE STORIES

To help create the epic, cinematic feel, Hollywood scriptwriter Randall Johnson (*The Doors*, *The Mask of Zorro*) was called in to pen the story. A key part of his assignment was to create a cast of characters



who were well-developed yet still familiar to players. The story itself had to set the mood and establish the motivation of each character and also helps answer the question of precisely what the game will require you to do. It also had to create a driving narrative and the key theme that emerged was identity. Who are you? Are you on the right side or the wrong side? And when the sides aren't so clear cut, how do you decide what is the right thing to do?

The story takes its protagonist, Colton White, on a journey through all these questions. On the way, he goes from greenhorn to badass and out the other side. He'll make friends and enemies, face betrayal and find unexpected allies and ultimately answer the question: who is he?

OLD-TIME STORYTELLIN'

As the game begins, Colton and his father Ned (a mountain man – think Grizzly Adams and you're about right) are meeting a mysterious woman named Sadie on a steamboat on the upper reaches of the Missouri river in Montana. They spy the woman but before they can contact her, she meets a preacher – who kills her. The boat is then attacked by a band

This guy looks like he loves America a little too much



of renegade soldiers. Colton and Ned join the fight against these invaders and, during a lull in the action, Ned hands his son a ticket from a whorehouse in Nevada and tells him that, after all these years, "I'm not your dad." He then throws Colton overboard just as the riverboat's boiler explodes, sinking the ship and (presumably) killing Ned.

Gameplay proper starts at this point, with Colton traveling South to Nevada in search of the whorehouse. At this point, the Neversoft crew turned the game on and we watched as Ned rode into town. Eventually finding the whorehouse he shows the ticket and is directed to a whore named Jenny. But Jenny's customer wants service now and doesn't appreciate Colton's interruption so, predictably, a massive gunfight erupts. As Jewett pointed out, "one thing about the American West [is] everybody's got a gun."

Once the combat had finished, Jenny gave Colton his 'inheritance' – a large locked trunk. At this point, Colton is free to either pursue the storyline directly or to take jobs in the city to improve his skills. *Gun* is a mission-based, free-roaming, third-person action title, which means you can concentrate solely on the missions that move the story along or simply kill some time exploring the map, taking on side



Paul almost didn't recognise Bob with his pants on

missions and enjoying the environment. Crucially, the side missions help improve your skills and they're not just random slices of action – each one is a mini-story in itself.

As you'd expect, the main missions are a varied lot and you'll find yourself protecting Jenny as she travels to Dodge City, defending Coolles as they struggle to complete a bridge in the face of an Apache attack, busting yourself, then a safecracker associate, out of prison and attacking a heavily fortified outpost.

DRAW, PARDNER

"Player control is something we take very seriously. Our goal with *Gun* is to give you that fluid control from *Tony Hawk* in a shooting game." Jewett was quite up-front with their technological goals and the game features all-new technology in many areas.

Shooting is the heart of the game and from what we saw, all the ingredients are there for *Gun*'s controls to rival those of its skateboarding stablemate. Combat takes place from a third-person perspective and the first thing we noticed was the well-behaved camera and smooth animation. *Gun*



"Get ready to play dead, puppies"

"one thing about the American West [is] everybody's got a gun."

READIN' WRITIN' AND 'RITHMATIC

Gun, like most third-person action games, is not an RPG but as you progress your skills and abilities will improve. Characters are rated in the following categories: Gunhand (reload time, accuracy); Quickdraw (for the slo-mo mode); Melee; Horse; and Health. Different kinds of side missions will improve different skills, so herding cattle will improve your Horse skill, defeating all comers in a bar-room brawl will improve your Melee skill and so on. The game will lead you into the missions you need to up-skill yourself in so you can progress.



“Our goal with *Gun* is to give you that fluid control from *Tony Hawk* in a shooting game.”

This gunslinger's smoked more guys than Paul



combat has all the wrinkles we've come to expect – dual-wielding pistols, sticks of dynamite as makeshift grenades, the ability to lean out from cover, to take a human hostage and use them as a shield, ragdoll physics and detailed hit locations, aiming and sniping – the whole shebang.

There's even a first-person slo-mo killing effect. Your meter charges as you kill your enemies and it's engaged by pressing **LB**. You then use the right thumbstick to toggle between targets and move the cursor around for more precise aiming. You can execute your enemies with headshots, make them dance by shooting around their feet or even shoot the guns out of their hands and juggle them in the air. Every gun is modeled as a distinct object with its own mass and unique characteristics.

There's also a fair bit of blood; “this is not a spaghetti western. This is not a John Wayne film. This is not a Kevin Costner film. It is a brutal, lawless, vicious world”, Jewett emphasised, inspired more by post-modern Westerns like *Unforgiven* and *Deadwood*. The team at Neversoft wanted the gunfights especially to convey this.



The owner got the gold wheels from his appearance on *Pimp My Ride*

SIX GUN SLAUGHTER

The game features around 20 guns, all of which are historically accurate. “The technology was changing rapidly and there were some incredibly interesting, crazy weapons,” grinned Jewett, though he refused to be drawn on whether some of the stranger weapons would appear in the game.

As you progress your guns will be upgraded but the whole approach to weapons has been streamlined. Ammo is picked up from fallen enemies, not bought at shops, and you unlock new weapons by defeating bosses. You can also upgrade your guns by class as opposed to upgrading specific items. So if you've got a shotgun upgrade it'll apply to every shotgun you use. It seems a little odd at first but if you think of it as becoming an expert or specialist in a weapon type then it starts to make sense – you're not so much upgrading the weapons themselves, just your ability to use them.

We saw some of these weapons in action in the last big set-piece we got to watch. We were

treated to an extended battle sequence that occurs later in the game. Colton becomes allied to the Blackfoot Indians and joins them in an attack on a fort held by the renegade soldiers who attacked the steamboat and (indirectly) killed Ned. The fort has palisades, gatling guns, cannons and other defences.

Seeing a frontal assault is pointless, Colton joins a group of Blackfoots in canoes, paddling down the river beside the fort, picking off snipers and sneaking into the rear of the fortress. The fort's three cannons had to be captured and then turned on the Renegades to destroy their bunkers, sink their boats and blow up their ammo dump.

RIDING OFF INTO THE SUNSET

After a brief question and answer session, our visit was over. Neversoft has high hopes for *Gun* – “we expect to make a number of these”, as Jewett put it – and we can see the potential for the series to do well, possibly very well, at least in America. How will it fare in Australia? We'll just have to wait and see. ➤

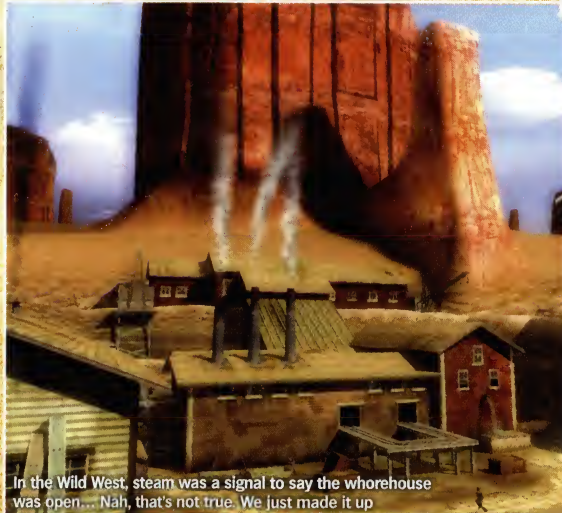


“My gun's not so gay anymore. Is it, punk?”

A BIG COUNTRY

Gun uses an all-new engine and the technology is pretty impressive. As you can see from the screenshots, the environments are highly detailed and the map is very, very large. The map takes in all key geographies from Montana to Kansas to New Mexico and all points between, and most impressively, when in the countryside there is no loading to break your involvement with the game. “Once you're in the world, you're in the world,” Jewett said with just a smidge of pride.

There will also be wilderness-based missions, such as hunting for rare or unique animals, and canny players will be able to find shortcuts, pick good places for ambushes or just enjoy travelling through a massive, fully-realised virtual world.



In the Wild West, steam was a signal to say the whorehouse was open... Nah, that's not true. We just made it up





SEX ON WHEELS

words: Narayan Pattison

There's no doubt that the *Need for Speed Underground* series owns the streets. Its cars drive faster, sound better and most definitely look sexier than anything else on the road. *Need for Speed Most Wanted* shifts the action up a gear by taking the races out of the relatively safe night setting and into broad daylight, forcing you to dodge heavy traffic, evade intense police pursuits and fight to survive!



Who said Herbie the Love Bug was the only car that didn't need a driver?

Figuring out how to follow on from the PS2's two most successful street racing games can't have been a simple task. It would have been very easy for EA to sit back, make a handful of safe upgrades and release *Need for Speed Underground 3*. A few of EA's sports franchises have definitely been guilty of that approach. Luckily for us, the *Most Wanted* team wasn't afraid to mess with *Underground*'s winning formula and shake things up a bit so that it could take the concept to an even more exciting place.

Along with the desire to do something fresh, the team was also committed to responding to consistent feedback from *Need for Speed* fans asking to see a return of the series' earlier police pursuits. With these two goals in place, the team went on to create a game that's all about racing in the most dangerous conditions possible (busy city streets in broad daylight) and moving up the police Black List to become the most wanted illegal street racer.

Gran Turismo meets Burnout

The *Need for Speed* series has always walked an interesting line between being completely grounded in reality and being a game that's exaggerated for fun. The team is aware that being focused on a complete simulation doesn't necessarily always translate to a fun game. *Most Wanted* goes to some amazing lengths to recreate its cars in as much detail as possible (including using laser scanning to ensure that every single paint chip is modeled correctly) but it never loses sight of the goal to create an experience that's as much fun as possible. "Hyper real" was phrase the developers used to describe *Most Wanted*'s take on racing.

Engaging your emotions is another aim for the team. The *Underground* games succeeded in engrossing players fully as they concentrated on their narrow vision of the road, allowing them to pick the best racing line. *Most Wanted* has all the engrossing action of *Underground*'s drag races but now you have

the added danger of police. If you're racing and you suddenly see police lights flashing in your rearview mirror, your adrenalin will pound as you step on the gas in a desperate attempt to evade the cops before they can call in too many reinforcements.

Smart cops

Sexier visuals are definitely a big part of taking gaming to the next level but our money's on smarter and more believable AI to make the biggest impact in the coming years. All the laser scanning and satellite imagery in the world isn't going to keep racing games fresh in the future if it still feels like the opponents have less intelligence than a bowl of porridge.

The team was very keen to point out that *Most Wanted*'s police feature sophisticated AI that lets them adapt to your strategies, organise back-up via radio and use authentic police tactics to ram you off the road. Real highway police worked with the



THAT'S GOTTA HURT

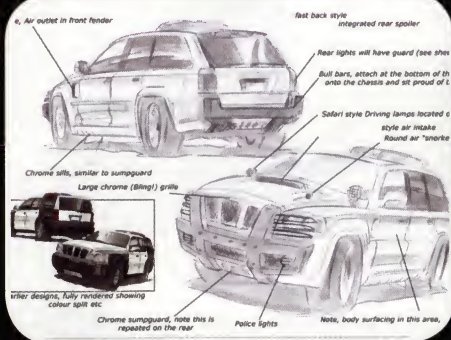
If you think this looks bad then just wait until you see some of the mashed wrecks you will turn the cop cars into in *Most Wanted*. The damage model for the cop cars is detailed enough to allow for multiple panels to be knocked off, as well as damage to the car's chassis and engine. The police cars will be able to drive with some damage but they will be taken out of the race if you keep pounding on them.

The only disappointment with *Most Wanted* is that your own cars will not take damage from crashes. Maybe you just win so much money from the races that you can afford to buy titanium cars?



SEX ON WHEELS

The sports police cars can keep up with even the fastest illegal rides



developers to ensure that the game's law enforcers are as efficient and accurate as possible. This realism even extends to all of the CB radio messages the police will use (which your car can listen in to illegally). After you've heard it a few times you get to know that a Code 66 means a roadblock is being set up ahead. With this info you can duck down a side alley before you hit the roadblock.

The police will adapt quite quickly to your strategies if you repeat them often. For example, you might save your nitrous during races in case you encounter cops. Then as soon as you are being pursued, you hit the nitrous and blur into the distance. The police will learn to associate your car with this tactic. So rather than engaging you with multiple cars and trying to box you in, the cops hang back and radio for high performance police cars (with their own nitrous) to intercept you.

Leaving the road and cutting across a park might be another tactic you are fond of. By leading cops through destructible scenery like fences you can try to use your superior driving skills to avoid obstacles like trees and rivers that the police might not be skilled

BMW: Germany's fourth best export – behind Oktoberfest, freaky porn and punk band Wizo



enough to avoid. After failing to follow you through a park a couple of times the police will adapt and radio ahead for roadblocks on the other side.

Although the cops in *Most Wanted* are smart, they're not psychic and they can't see through walls (like the fuzz in *San Andreas*). This means that if you manage to get out of sight of the police chasing you, they won't automatically follow you and will have to search around before they can continue the chase. This means that if you are coming over the crest of a hill and you see the police lights disappear in your rearview mirror, you know you have a moment to change your gameplan. You could continue on and trust yourself to out-race them, or you could slam on the breaks, pull in behind a billboard and watch as the cops go whipping past. This ability to outwit and outthink your pursuers is one of the most exciting elements of *Most Wanted* because no game has ever had AI on anything close to this level.

You've made the list

Most Wanted is all about being the most notorious

street racer and climbing to the top of the "Blacklist 15" which represents the top 15 most notorious street racers. The more cops you evade and the more damage you cause, both to police cars and to public property, the further up the list you'll progress.

Of course the racers who are already on the list are hardly going to pull over to the side of the road and hand you their keys. The other Blacklist members will serve as sort of bosses in the game that you must out-race. Although EA is remaining tight-lipped about exactly what racing modes are in *Most Wanted*, it's clear that the majority of *NFS* mainstays will still be there, plus a few extras.

In one of the demos we saw a drag race was being played out against a few other street racers. The drag race looked similar to those in *Underground 2*, except that with the new daylight setting and improved graphics engine it's now possible to enjoy every detail from the buffed metallic sheen of your rims to the cracks on the tarmac streets.

Gear changing was still the focus of the drag mode but there are new dramatic elements that have been dropped in to crank the tension right up. About half



"Damn! The cops are coming – help me find my pants!"



Best rear end we've seen since we accidentally stumbled onto Paul's sister's homepage



They don't call it the red rocket for nothing

way through the drag, a huge logging truck jackknifes across your lane. Initially it looks like this truck has completely blocked your path and forced an early end to the race, but a split-second lane change allows you to squeeze neatly under the truck's trailer and continue speeding along. At the end of the drag race we see a police roadblock. It's at this point when the drag race ends and the police all chase the winner, or the most 'notorious' racer, in the new pursuit mode.

We've seen plenty of street racing games that have featured the concept of gaining respect and street cred, but it has a lot more weight in *Most Wanted* because your level of notoriety changes the tactics the police deploy against you.

To gain maximum notoriety from a police chase you want to go for as much damage as possible for as long as possible. The longer the chase goes for and the more notorious you are, the more police vehicles will get involved in the chase. And we're not just talking about squad cars either: Whether *Most Wanted* will feature as many law enforcement vehicles as *San Andreas* (cars, motorcycles, choppers, SUVs and tanks) is not yet



"Nice car, did your mum customise it?"

WORLD'S BEST POLICE CHASES

Blues Brothers

This classic flick was one long police chase that started with one cop car and culminated hundreds of cops chasing the brothers in cars, boats and helicopters!



UFO chase

On 11 August 2000, two officers in a helicopter spotted and attempted to follow a UFO in Sussex, England. No prizes for guessing who won that race.



Pig on pig

An American police officer spotted a runaway pig on Highway 66. After 45 minutes the officer was unable to catch the pig and abandoned the pursuit.



Terminator 2

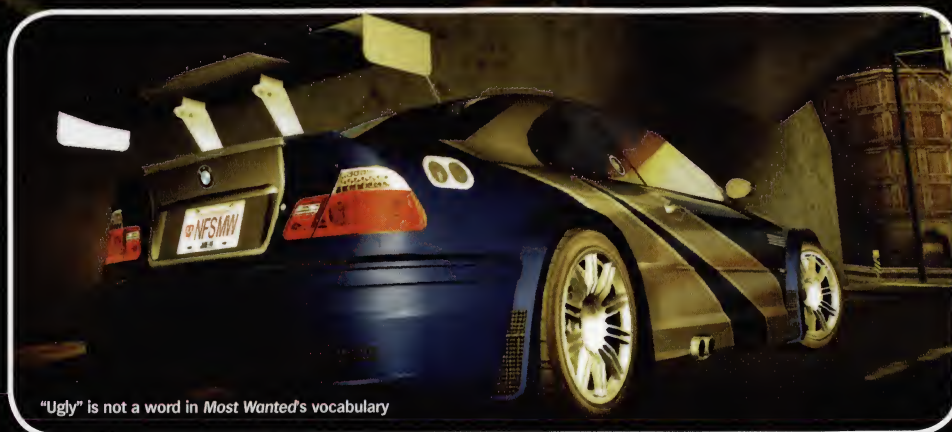
This blockbuster featured the T-1000 going from motorcycle to chopper and then to semi trailer all in one police chase. That's lightweight compared to the cops in *Most Wanted*.



Submarine

After watching one too many *James Bond* movies, a pair of German police attempted to give chase to a local boat thief. It didn't quite go as planned.





"Ugly" is not a word in *Most Wanted's* vocabulary



His other car is a 180B

confirmed but the game definitely has multiple police vehicle types. The police will become more and more aggressive as the chase goes on, so the longer you keep it going the less chance you have to get away. Obviously if you get caught your notoriety is going to take a dive. So the aim is to know your limits and keep your road rage going only as long as you can get away with.

Pay 'n' Spray


Although specific details on the car tuning have not been released yet, we do know it will play a much larger roll in *Most Wanted*. The greater variety of cars (everything from American muscle to exotics) means that you now have the ability to tune affordable cars to the point where they can compete with sports cars that rolled out of the showroom at 10 times the price! Being able to pit something you've created against something top automobile engineers have created is great to see in the *Need for Speed* series.

As well as tuning your car for more performance, tuning becomes an essential way to manage the level of heat your car has attached to it. If you've just trashed 20 cop cars in a huge chase across the city then your car is going to have half the force on its tail the second it rolls onto the streets again. However, if you take the car to the body shop and change parts, paint and vinyls that will effectively lower its heat level because the cops won't be able to recognise that it's the same car as before. If a player doesn't manage their heat level they will quickly find themselves shopping for a new car.

Cruisin' the streets

As well as requests for the return of police pursuits EA found that there were two types of players when it came to *Underground 2's* open city experience. Some players really wanted to retain and bring more meaning into the environment. They wanted more things to do, and

more things to happen to them while exploring the world. The other type of players were more racing-driven, and really wanted an easy way to jump from event to event, thus bypassing the need to drive from Point A to point B in the city. By cramming much more random events and interaction within the world, as well as a streamlined career mode that lets players jump to the next event, the team has been able to cater well to the different types of *Need for Speed* players.

It works well if you look at *Need for Speed Most Wanted* as a balancing act between risk and reward. Street racing in broad daylight is much riskier than it ever was at night, and this brings in many dangerous new elements like heavier traffic and police chases. With these increased risks come much greater rewards. As you dodge trucks and roadblocks you'll be gripping the controller like a vice as your adrenalin surges, but after you've survived the race you'll feel like a god among men. That's how *Most Wanted* rolls! 

BEFORE AND AFTER

BEFORE



The *Need for Speed* franchise was born on the unsuccessful 3DO console in the early '90s. The graphics were as crusty as Luke's pick-up lines but in its day *NFS* was a revolutionary racer that was one of the first to leave the track behind and hit the open road. Cop chases were present, but they only involved lone cars. A couple of years later it was converted to the original PlayStation.

AFTER



Almost 15 years later, the *Need for Speed* series has taken one giant leap for gamers. Not only are there now more polygons in one wheel than there was in the original's entire background, but *Most Wanted* is now crammed full of super intelligent police cars that force you to fight for every inch of the road.

THE DRIVER'S SEAT

O PS2 hits the road with *Need for Speed Most Wanted's* associate producer, Justin Wiebe...

OPS2: Were there any specific police chases from movies that inspired elements of *Most Wanted*?

JW: For the first few months we gathered up as many movies involving police chases as possible, as well as watching several shows about cops and cop chases. This was really where we made the decision to give the cops a more realistic and official feel in the game. Our research also sparked the desire to make the cops a much more dominant element within the game. We didn't want to simply add cop chases to a racing game – we wanted to build a racing game around capturing the experience of actually being in one of those epic Hollywood inspired cop chases.

OPS2: Considering the game has an open city, will players be completely free to take any path to a finish line or will there be set routes?

JW: There will be a large variety of game modes in *Most Wanted*, some races will of course be created with barriers outlining the selected race route. Other modes have been created specifically to take advantage of the open world, by allowing the player to take any path they desire to reach the goal of the game mode. At this point in the project I don't want to give away too much, other than saying several of the game modes will be directly related to building up the player's reputation with the police by directly interacting with them and accomplishing "notorious acts".

OPS2: What sort of 'strategic tactics' can players use to get cops off their tail?

JW: The tactics required to evade the cops will be directly related to both the heat level of the player's car and the current tactic the cops are using to bust the player. For example, if the cops deploy a rolling roadblock ahead of the player, thus making them unable to pass the cops, the player has the option of faking them out at an intersection by leaning left, then using the e-brake and making a hard right turn, or they could opt to pull a 180 and double back, thus forcing the rolling roadblock to turn around and chase from the rear. However, things will get much more complicated later on when the cops begin using box formations, thus

cornering the player in from all directions making them unable to fake them out in any direction or double back. When a box formation is used the player needs to try to force an opening by side-swiping the cops on the left and right, making enough room to use nitrous to blast past the cop in front and escape the formation, or adversely they can also opt to try to line the cops up with a traffic car and when the cop swerves to avoid traffic a window of opportunity will be presented to the player to escape.

OPS2: What can you tell us about the new cars that *Most Wanted* will feature?

JW: We've been keeping the car list under wraps over the past few months, however I think it's time we give a little sample of the diversity of cars that will be available in *Most Wanted*. The main thing to note is that *Most Wanted* will feature cars from every category – ranging from imports, American muscle, sports and exotics. Here's a taste of what's to come: BMW M3, Mazda RX8, Mustang GT, Lotus Elise, Subaru Impreza WRX STI and the Porsche GT.

OPS2: Being able to drive underneath the trailers of big trucks (like we saw in the drag mode demo) is very cool. Are there any other surprising stunts like this in the game?

JW: Oh yes. One of the biggest aspects to developing *Most Wanted* this year is our ability to custom tune any type of 'game moment' within any race. We are actively tuning every race event to feature both random and pre-determined game moments where the player will require some split-second decision making to get out of harm's way. One moment similar to driving under the logging truck is the car transport moment, where a sedan will accidentally side-swipe a car transport ahead of the racers and consequently the truck will begin fishtailing and cars will fall off the back of the truck. This will create a variety of obstacles for the racers to evade, and create one of those white knuckled game moments we're striving for this year.

OPS2: Compared to *Need for Speed Underground 2*, how much bigger will the city in *Need for Speed Most Wanted* be?

JW: The world in *Most Wanted* is roughly 200km of track. The tracks will be noticeably improved,

allowing for larger road widths and a diversity of drives, all designed to allow a much higher speed threshold. The world will also be much more interactive, where the player can interact with hundreds of objects, in essence using them to attempt to block and evade police chases in the open world.

OPS2: Can you tell us anything about the other vehicles police will use besides regular cop cars?

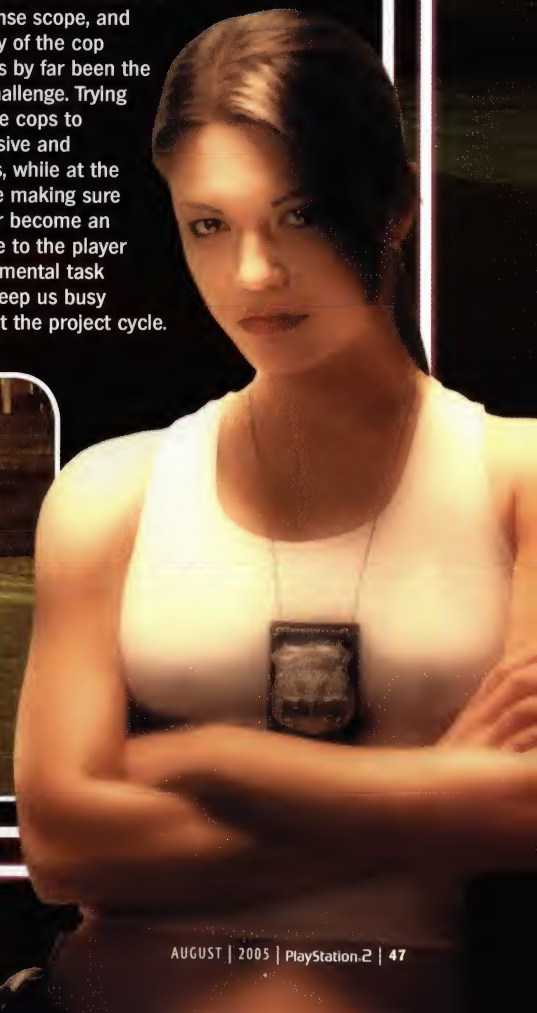
JW: We're still keeping many aspects of the pursuit under wraps at the moment. There will be a large progression tree the player will go through as the heat level on their car increases. The end result will be more aggressive cops, new tactics used, as well as new cop vehicle types that will get involved in the pursuit and very cool skill-based evasion techniques.

OPS2: *Burnout: Revenge* features the ability to take opponents out by knocking traffic cars into them. Does *Most Wanted* feature anything along these lines?

JW: While *Burnout* is focused on traffic and opponent destruction we're trying to go for a more authentic feel to our game, where there will be consequential damage to all vehicles, but this will not be a mandatory focus for *Most Wanted*. Evading pursuits and winning races will be the primary focus of the game and will help the player work their way up the Blacklist 15.

OPS2: What was the biggest challenge you faced when creating *Most Wanted*?

JW: Getting the cop formations and counter tactics tuned has been the biggest focus point for *Most Wanted*. Because of the immense scope, and complexity of the cop AI, this has by far been the biggest challenge. Trying to tune the cops to be aggressive and dangerous, while at the same time making sure they never become an annoyance to the player is a monumental task that will keep us busy throughout the project cycle.





BACK TO THE FUTURE

WORDS: TRISTAN OGILVIE

Last month we brought you the first info on PS3. This month we've got the latest games announced, impressions on the two biggest PS3 games so far and our wish list for the ultimate *GTA* game!

Dead Rising

Developer: Capcom

You think the *Res Evil* games get a bit hairy when there are a handful of zombies on your tail; imagine what it's like with a few hundred handfuls nipping at your heels! You play a photojournalist who becomes trapped in a mall as thousands of shoppers suddenly become transformed into flesh eating zombies. Almost everything in the mall can be used as a weapon; you can run over zombies with a lawnmower, club them with pipes, shoot them with firearms or even tear their bodies to strips with your bare hands! Which was how we felt the last time we were forced to go shopping with our girlfriend.



Alan Wake

Developer: Remedy

Though famous for their gritty noir *Max Payne* series, developer Remedy is making a departure from the urban setting for its PS3 debut and heading to a rural, North American town ripped straight out of the pages of a Stephen King novel. Central character Alan Wake is a horror author who loses grip on reality and can't tell the difference between nightmares and consciousness. Expect plenty of terrifying moments with flashlights and fog, set within an absolutely stunning landscape that features its own weather systems and a revolutionary lighting engine that transforms night to day.



Metronome

Developer: Team Tarsier

Metronome is the name of a city; a sprawling metropolis consisting of haphazardly built houses and arcane machinery. The life of every citizen in Metronome is dictated by the Corporation; a single bureaucratic entity that owns all of the land, infrastructure and industries. The unique feature of *Metronome* is that sound is your weapon; you can record sounds in-game and then use them to manipulate your surroundings to solve puzzles, fight off enemies and even take control of other citizens. Sounds like a unique gameplay idea to us!



2 days to Vegas

Developer: Steel Monkeys

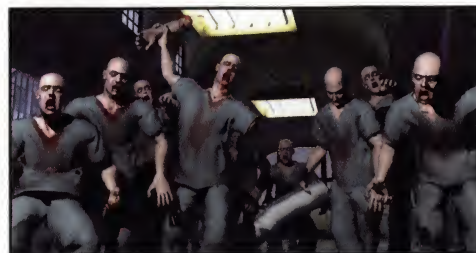
There's not too much you can say about *2 days to Vegas* without dripping drool all down the front of your shirt, needless to say that it's a story driven, third-person action-adventure game. Car chases, shootouts and unexpected twists take place in several yet-to-be-named major cities across the USA (although presumably Las Vegas is one of them). It looks absolutely photo realistic, and it's precisely the level of visuals we expect from a *GTA* title on PS3 (see page 51). But seriously, look at that screen!



Possession

Developer: Blitz Games

Possession may look like a typical survivor horror game, but it's actually an action-oriented real-time strategy game. We know what you're thinking, "Real-time strategy? Sounds boring", but this is no *Yawn of the Dead*. In *Possession* you take control of a mutated zombie leader and command an entire army of brain-dead brain-eaters. Unleashing up to 200 flesh-hungry zombies onto a crowd of innocent people and watching them transform humans into the undead certainly sounds like fun to us.



Others confirmed

- Metal Gear Solid 4 (Konami)
- Avalon (Climax Studios)
- Dark Sector (Digital Extremes)
- The Darkness (Majesco)
- Infraworld (Quantic Dream)
- Ni-Oh (Koei)
- Project Delta (Playlogic International)
- ShadowClan (Tiger Hill Entertainment)
- Stranglehold (Midway)



KILLZONE PS3

Also known as 'Number one reason we want a PS3!'

Our mouths are a little drier. Our heart rates are a little faster. Beer tastes a little different now (but still far, far too sweet to stop at one). Life has been forever changed thanks to the two breathtaking minutes of *Killzone PS3* footage we witnessed at E3 2005. Did we say, "we witnessed"? Because we meant "we were completely chewed up, gargled and devoured by".

We're born again. Our collective existences can now be segregated into two completely polarised halves; pre *Killzone* trailer and post *Killzone* trailer. Pre KT, we were impressed by even the slightest hint of aptitude in our AI comrades. Post KT, we expect them to hand us some ammo when we're on empty, to share a nervous joke with us during the calm moments before battle, to stare desperately into our eyes with a plausible look of pure shock and terror after they've been hit. We want intelligence that is anything but Artificial.

Pre KT, explosions in videogames were the digital equivalent of smoke and mirrors; an obvious trick constructed out of lighting and particle effects. Post KT, we want to feel the blast of heat on our faces, we want to be taken by surprise by the hulking piece of shrapnel suddenly grazing past our ears, we want to feel a visual

and sonic impact so powerful that we have to grab the arm of our couch just to steady ourselves.

It's just too good to be true. Can it be real? That draw distance; it's as if there's no boundary to the environment, as if the battlefield literally goes on forever. The flame thrower-wielding soldier who gets shot and proceeds to inadvertently ignite himself and all those around him; could this really be a regular occurrence in-game? Could the gameplay experience be this random and therefore realistic?

Developer Guerilla certainly has its work cut out. Delivering a full-length videogame experience that lives up to the two-minute trailer will be no easy task (anyone can be good for two minutes, just ask every date that Paul has ever had). But they've certainly got the tools to get the job done; there's no question that the PS3 hardware is easily the most intimidating and robust console platform ever designed.

For now we'll just go back to watching the trailer, finding more things to talk about with each viewing. Did you see that soldier dive out of the exploding gunship in a futile act of self-preservation? Did you notice the two ISA soldiers dragging their wounded comrade to safety? Can you even believe your eyes?

WHAT WE WANT:

1. Intelligent teammates

If the trailer's anything to go by, your comrades are going to be freaky geniuses. They'll hand you a bazooka when a gunship has you pinned down, and flank your enemies with surprise attacks without you even issuing a command.

2. Dual display splitscreen

If the PS3 can support seven wireless controllers (plus more of the old fashioned plug-in variety), and it can be hooked up to two HD displays at once, then are we wrong to assume that you'd be able to get your mates around for four-way split-screen on one TV, and another four-way on the other, all running off the one PS3?

3. Controllable vehicles

They were missing from the PS2 original, but they're pretty common in the FPS genre these days. Leaving them out again would be criminal.

4. Large scale multiplayer

Given the apparent size of the environments, and the power of the PS3 itself, online battles with support for around 64 players doesn't seem too much to ask for, right?

5. Guns! Guns! Guns!

The tangible feeling of wielding heavy artillery was totally nailed in the original *Killzone*. Let's keep that up, and pack in a larger variety of boomsticks and explosives.



2 Fast 2 Furious wished it looked this good!

FREEZE FRAME



WHAT WE WANT:

1. Varied environments

Burning through dusty deserts is great, but it would be cool if we could skid down snow-covered hills or splash through murky swamplands; potentially based on real world-locations.

2. Road Rash Redux

Cars can use their bulk to muscle opponents out of the way, but what about the bikes? We suggest *Road Rash*-style kicks and backhand attacks to deal with fellow bikers.

3. Reckless rewards

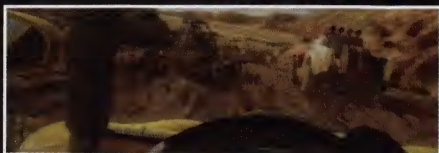
As proven by *Burnout*, rewarding players for driving dirty is crucial – be it with points to buy upgrades after each race or the more obvious instant boosts to a turbo meter.

4. No invisible walls

Obviously there has to be some restrictions, but if we want to risk our own safety in the pursuit of first place by launching headlong off cliffs for a 100ft drop shortcut, then let us!

5. Multiplayer mayhem

Clearly multiplayer is a must for *MotorStorm*, both online and off. We want a choice of modes too, particularly ones that take advantage of the spectacular crash modelling.



MOTORSTORM

Quicker than a marriage to Britney Spears, and dirtier too!

Developer Evolution Studios has previously been known as the minds behind the impressively consistent but hardly earth shattering WRC series on PSone and PS2. So imagine our pants-wettingly pleasant surprise when this burst of jittery, high-speed and irresistibly dangerous racing footage exploded out of nowhere onto screen at the PlayStation 3 press conference. It was like being hit by a busload of lingerie models; even if we'd seen it coming we would have still been too spellbound to get out of the way.

MotorStorm looks to be based around open-entry off-road races; cars, buggies, ATVs and motorbikes all battling their way to the finish line over jagged and barren terrain, with absolutely no holds barred. Drivers mercilessly tail-whip opponents into unyielding trackside scenery while motorbike riders drive right up the back of other vehicles and crash down off the bonnet and onto the road ahead; flinging mud back into the windscreen.

It all happens at roughly the speed of light, and the drama is intensified by the teeth-chattering helmet-cam viewpoint that depicts a driver frantically checking his side mirrors and dashboard gauges,

oblivious to the metal fragments of wreckage ahead, spinning and flipping their way towards him.

At another moment a neck and neck duel between two motorbikes took to the air off a jump before reaching a splintering climax as they both crash-landed through the roof of trackside shack; wiping out in an explosive cloud of dust and brittle wooden palings. Later still a four-wheel drive aggressively grinds a buggy into a serrated cliff face, eventually causing its newly shredded opponent to flip over and collapse into a crumpled, upside-down heap.

Arguably the biggest 'heart in your mouth' moment of *MotorStorm* we've seen so far was the closing seconds of the trailer; which saw a fallen rider struggle desperately to right his bike while a car wreck clumsily cart wheeled towards him from behind. The video was frozen a split-second before the impending impact and then faded to black, leaving a stunned auditorium to flinch at the thought of the implied outcome.

You have never seen racing this intense. *MotorStorm* takes off in top gear and leaves *Midnight Club*, *Need for Speed* and even the *Burnout* to enjoy a three-course meal of dust, with gritty mud cake for dessert.



DARE TO DREAM: THE FUTURE OF GTA?



Is this what the next *Grand Theft Auto* game will look like?

Imagine *GTA* with these graphics...

PS3 could handle it without breaking a sweat!

Okay, so we swiped the above image directly from 2 days to Vegas, but we can't really imagine *GTA* on PS3 looking any more realistic than this, so we'll use it as a basis.

Imagine a living, breathing city on your television screen, one so vivid that it was as if you were staring right out the window of your house and into the streets of your neighbourhood. Picture pedestrians and police officers, not following rigidly preset paths and routines, but living their own lives and following their own storylines. Storylines that exist in the background to your own; that you are completely oblivious to until you actually enter them and become a character in them.

What if you robbed the same bank twice in one month? Wouldn't security be upped and the staff be on a nervous edge if you came back to hit it a third time? What if a city crime lord noticed your up and coming reputation as a gangster, and got a hitman to pay you a visit; not in a cut-scene but in a surprise sniper attack from a rooftop as you walked casually to your car?

What if the husband of the woman you hit with your car saw your licence plate, found out where you lived and burned your house down with you in it, in a premeditated act of revenge? What if there were

consequences and ramifications to your every move?

It would result in a game that would last for years, and one that would impact dramatically on the games industry, as the owners of it would feel no need to buy any other titles. It would greatly reduce the number of units sold for every other competing title on the market.

So, what if a large number of publishers and developers came together to make it? What if the basic *GTA*-style environment was the initial purchase, and it acted like a backbone or shell to the additional components you chose to add depending on your taste? Then you could tailor the city to your own tastes, adding the *Tony Hawk* skating engine if you wanted to kick flip and grind your way around, or importing the *Need For Speed* cars if illegal street racing was more your scene. Never mind customisable plastic console faceplates – what if there was a fully customisable console game?



THESE FEATURES:



COUNTER-OP

Counter-op is different to co-op in the sense that your friends aren't with you; they're against you. What if you were playing an online game, and you got into a deadly car chase with a friend-controlled cop? The car chase ends in an accident on the highway; you both emerge and get into a fistfight, before you finally get the upper hand and push him over the edge of the overpass, plummeting to his death. But at that instant, the pedestrian walking past you starts twitching, before transforming back into your friend Agent Smith-style, and the chase resumes!



PURSUIT FORCE

It's one of our most anticipated PSP titles, mainly for the fact that you can hastily leap from one moving vehicle to the next. What if you were playing PS3 *GTA* online, and your mate stole your car. Wouldn't it be cool if you could latch onto the bonnet and desperately try to fire shots through the windscreen, while at the same time your mate careened the car wildly from one side of the street to the other in an effort to shake you off?



GEO-MOD

GTA on PS3 needs destructible environments. In the past we've been able to total our cars, knock down streetlights and smash through (some) windows, but we want to raze buildings! We want to plant charges on the concrete pylons supporting a bridge, detonate it and watch the whole thing sink into the harbour. And not just one bridge, but every bridge on the map. We should be able to blast our way through the earth and down into a subway tunnel, if we wanted to (it's cheaper than paying the fare).



MMORPG

No, we don't mean rounding up a posse of elves and mages and setting off to slay rats in a field, we just mean that we want an online *GTA* city where the majority of inhabitants are human controlled. You could drive past a tennis court where two people were stuck in an epic five set battle, or look up into the sky to see someone else joyriding in a helicopter, and they would all be human. It would be everyone playing the same game, but enjoying entirely different experiences. And the transition between each experience would be seamless; you'd never have to swap the disc in your drive.



EYETOY

The EyeToy technology already exists, so why have a faceless *GTA* character when you can scan your mug in and literally be yourself? Imagine if you became the number one ranked triathlete in *GTA* PS3, and then you found your face smiling on billboards and cereal boxes within the game universe! Or if you wronged someone, the next time they caught up with you they'd recognise you, as you'd be completely unique!

We love the *GTA* series as much as anyone – to be honest, it's hard not to. That said, we can also imagine just how disheartening it is for developers outside of Rockstar to be constantly compared to the gaming juggernaut. All it takes is a few screenshots and a short press release that mentions the words 'free roaming' to get the detractors started.

We've all seen it happen – message boards across the internet light up with threads like "Will this game be better than *GTA*?" and "*GTA* vs.

South America – home of passionate soccer players and exporter of jiggling butt-cheeks



Life's a beach, isn't it?



unfortunate game" to name a couple. More often than not, the fact that nobody has even played it yet doesn't come into the equation.

Just Cause is one of those games – going where many have gone before but few have come out unscathed. You'd do well not to write *Just Cause* off as simply another *GTA*-clone just 'cause it shares a few common elements. We wouldn't write the upcoming tennis sim *Top Spin* off because it looks like a *Pong* clone, would we? Admittedly, comparisons to the likes of *GTA San Andreas* are inevitable, but probably because it's far easier to do that than describe it as a free-roaming, third person shooter/driving/flying/boating action/adventure.

But that's exactly what *Just Cause* is – and it's looking quite incredible.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

While the rest of the gaming community was catching free-roaming fever and digitising cities for gamers to run

amuck in, Rockstar was building an entire state – and we were amazed. The fictional state of San Andreas was huge. Just how much further could this sort of game go on this generation?

How about an entire country? No, surely that's impossible?

Well, proving beyond a doubt that Swedes are capable of far more than just kooky Ikea furniture and Volvos, Avalanche has created just that – a living, breathing, island nation just off the coast of South America. But you won't find San Esperito in your school atlas. Just like San Andreas before it, it too is a fictional creation – albeit a very realistic one. One glance at the beautiful island Avalanche has created and you'll swear it was pulled directly from a South American travel brochure. It looks like a holiday destination. It's not just beautiful though – it's big. In fact, it's damn big. Want a comparison? Activision's *True Crime* featured a massive recreation of Los Angeles. Weighing in at roughly 300 square miles, its size was unprecedented. Well, 300

Don't be distracted by the beautiful scenery – you've got stuff to blow up!



cause

The ambitious debut project from Swedish developer Avalanche, *Just Cause*, is the latest addition to Eidos' impressive line-up. And just when you thought games couldn't get any bigger...

square miles is a drop in *Just Cause's* ocean – San Esperito is 1,225 square miles chock full of serene beaches, dense jungle, canyons, cliffs, villages and cities. That's about 3,173 square kilometres! Thanks to some clever programming that would've saved countless weeks planting an entire tropical rainforest by hand, it's covered by literally millions of trees and pieces of vegetation. Avalanche also claims dotting the country you'll find around 100 villages, two or three major cities and key installations like a prison, a Presidential palace and even a strangely positioned strip club in the centre of an apparently extinct volcano. It'll be all on one disc and all inside your PS2. To put it in a real perspective, the fictional nation of San Esperito is over four times the size of Singapore, over twice as big as Hong Kong and infinitely larger than our esteemed writer Paul Frew's own sense of self-satisfaction. Big is an understatement. Try freakin' enormous. And by the way, there are no loading times. Impressed? So are we.

Trouble in paradise

However, San Esperito is far from the tranquil, tropical paradise it appears to be from the air. Run with an iron fist by evil President Salvador Montalban and infested with corruption of the highest order, San Esperito is slowly tearing itself apart. Rebel guerrillas and drug cartels are vying for power and the impoverished population is on the brink of revolution. All the while, Montalban is stockpiling weapons of mass destruction and the rogue South American nation is beginning to pose a significant threat to the world's nuclear stability. Nice place to visit, wouldn't want to live there.

Sounds like the right time to bring in the cavalry, doesn't it? Unfortunately it looks like the US military is still a little pre-occupied in Iraq for the time being, and the United Nations' angry letters are being returned to sender. So, in typical Hollywood fashion, it's up to one man to bring down the murderous regime – sophisticated Spanish CIA super-agent extraordinaire, Rico Rodriguez.

Although he sounds like the token Hispanic character from a short-lived American sitcom, the flamboyant über-spy is a particularly talented individual. Best described as equal parts El Mariachi (from Robert Rodriguez's Mexican western trilogy) and James Bond (at least, any of them besides Timothy Dalton), Rico oozes cool – the kind most videogame characters never achieve. With a voice akin to that of Antonio Banderas and an attitude to match, Rico is a seriously capable mof when it comes to getting the job done.



Effect

Words: Luke Reilly

A JOB WELL DONE

Exactly how you get the job done, however, is entirely up to you. San Esperito is divided up into a number of provinces, and a number of factions like, the government itself, rebels and two opposing drug cartels, will be in control of the various provinces – not unlike Pandemic's *Mercenaries*. By taking out key settlements in these territories you can disrupt the balance of power in San Esperito. For instance, at one point we witnessed Rico trigger a revolt in a government-controlled zone and, after eradicating the required number of government goons, power in the province shifted. During the fire fight Rico had rebel guerrillas fighting by his side. The missions you receive and the reactions of San Esperito's warring groups to your presence are dynamically changed by your own actions. Some players may choose to play methodically and purposefully, others may choose to incite chaos, playing factions off

against one another – either way *Just Cause* will cater to you. Avalanche is aiming to provide players with a plethora of different ways and opportunities to complete objectives in whatever way you see fit. Again, similar to *Mercenaries*, *Just Cause* will feature a reputation, or 'prestige', system that will determine how the various factions in San Esperito view you.

Avalanche took us through a tour of *Just Cause*'s first few missions. The first began high in the skies above San Esperito with Rico freefalling towards the island. Rico opened his parachute and he sailed down onto the beach where he was to meet his CIA contact, Sheldon. Things go a little pear-shaped though and you're immediately ambushed by the military. It's not a great start for Rico, but it's a perfect start for *Just Cause* – it immediately drops you right into the action, quite literally in fact. No laborious and uninspiring tutorial missions here – just get in there and start ventilating anybody who points a machine gun at you.

It's a refreshingly different approach and one we wished was used more often. You'll learn the ropes, don't worry about that – only you'll be learning on the fly. After the beach was cleared of enemy soldiers, Rico hops into the back of Sheldon's jeep and mans the heavy machine gun conveniently mounted in the rear. A breathtaking chase sequence ensues and you'll not only need to hold off enemy jeeps but also some nimble attack choppers too. It's fast and totally in-your-face. Some games start by timidly holding your hand – *Just Cause* will start by slapping you in the face and shoving you out the door, and that's just fine by us!

We found controlling Rico was particularly intuitive thanks to a well-mapped interface that used a combination of both sticks for Rico's movement. The targeting system also seems fairly user-friendly too – a soft lock-on feature will give you assistance tracking targets you choose without getting in the way of your movement. It's already easily as solid as any standalone third-person shooter, and yet there's still a great deal more up Rico's tailored sleeve. Opting for a slightly more arcade skew than the likes of other free-roaming adventures like *True Crime* and *The Getaway*, Rico has a variety of crazy moves he can pull off during his exploits around the island. Easily the best we saw during the demo was Rico's ability to scramble out of a moving car and onto the roof. At this point, Rico popped his

...the fictional nation of San Esperito is over four times the size of Singapore...



SIZE DOES MATTER

In terms of what we're used to seeing in similar games, 1,225 square miles, or roughly 3,173 square kilometres, is absolutely massive. The island of Hawaii is around 4,028 square miles – over twice the size of *Just Cause*'s San Esperito – so you may think San Esperito is a tad small to be a legitimate country. To save you digging around for your old geography homework, here's a list of just a few of the countries around the world smaller than Avalanche's fantasy island.

- * Maui 727 square miles
- * Barbados 166 square miles
- * Malta 122 square miles
- * Singapore 246 square miles
- * Luxembourg 998 square miles
- * Samoa 1137 square miles
- * Hong Kong 422 square miles
- * Tonga 289 square miles
- * Micronesia 271 square miles
- * Guam 212 square miles
- * Monaco 0.8 square miles
- * Principality of Sealand 0.0002 square miles (that's only 550 square metres! Do yourself a favour and look this one up!)



parachute and soared high into the air. We couldn't help but grin, although Rico wasn't done yet. He then carefully glided down to the road again, ditched the 'chute, landed on a passing car and proceed to yank out the poor sap behind the wheel and commandeer the ride for himself. This isn't a cut-scene or a special move you're only able to pull off every now and then – this is one of Rico's standard abilities. Super-agent Indeed. During our own hands-on time we were speeding across a large bridge, climbed to the roof of our car, leapt over the railing and parachuted into a river, looking for a boat to jack. Illustrating their commitment to fun over total realism, Avalanche has equipped Rico with an unlimited supply of 'chutes, so you can pull off the kind of moves that would have Hollywood stuntmen soiling themselves whenever-the-hell you want to!


THE NEED FOR SPEED

San Esperito is a big place, and as such Rico will require a large selection of transportation. Fortunately, Avalanche will deliver on all fronts and *Just Cause* will feature over 100 different vehicles, from beat-up rust buckets to souped-up sports cars and everything in between. Don't just expect vehicles of the four-wheeled variety, either. During our stint with *Just Cause* we tore through the jungle on motorcycles, flew both a light plane and an F-15-style fighter jet through a canyon and beached

all manner of watercraft. Avalanche even showed us an underwater submersible that, while still early in design, looked pretty darn cool.

Just Cause will also include a few unique vehicles you won't find cruising the streets – one of which is a CIA-designed SUV equipped with missiles and forward-firing machine guns, which will appear later in the final game. Needless to say, we never got stuck in traffic in this little mamma.

With sprawling jungle and plenty of room to explore, you'd be forgiven for wondering what on earth you'll do if you strand yourself in the middle of nowhere. The good news is that such an eventuality is catered for. If you do happen to get in a pickle and you've got nothing close by to steal and get back to civilisation you can get in touch with your CIA contacts for extraction or a vehicle drop. Handy, to say the least. The real CIA hasn't returned our calls since we accused them of killing Elvis.

Due for release early next year, *Just Cause* is still some time away, so we're looking forward to seeing more additions and improvements to it in coming months. How Avalanche has crammed so much in so far is totally beyond us. We've only just scratched the surface of what's going to be a massive game, in every sense of the word. There are still literally miles and miles of San Esperito we haven't even seen yet, so stay tuned for more recon in the near future. OPS2 out. 

IS THERE AN EVIL DICTATOR INSIDE YOU?

Want to find out whether you'd be capable of running a small South American nation with an iron fist? Try our helpful quiz and find out!

1) Your wardrobe consists mainly of...

- (a) a military dress uniform of indeterminate rank and a variety of war medals.
- (b) jeans and four favourite T-shirts.
- (c) early to mid '90s unwashed clothing.

2) You live in...

- (a) a lavish palace looming above the urban decay. There are WMDs in the basement.
- (b) your parents' house.
- (c) a biodome.

3) You're most comfortable...

- (a) in a bulletproof limo or the back of a jeep – depending on the occasion.
- (b) naked.
- (c) passed out beside Stephen Baldwin.

4) Most of life's problems can be solved by...

- (a) a firing squad.
- (b) beer.
- (c) thawing out Brendan Fraser and taking him to school with you.

5) When you were growing up you wanted to be...

- (a) Stalin.
- (b) bigger.
- (c) in the army now.

6) Look around the room. Are you...

- (a) the only person not holding a sub-machine gun?
- (b) watching *CSI*?
- (c) passed out beside Stephen Baldwin?

7) Your picture looks good...

- (a) painted on the side of a crumbling building.
- (b) on your girlfriend's dressing table.
- (c) on the *Son in Law* DVD. Okay, not *that* good.

Answered mostly (a)?

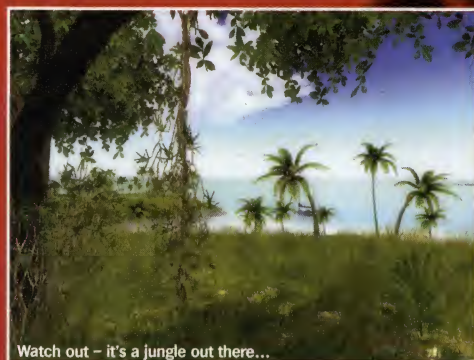
Congratulations – there's an evil maniac inside you just itching to get out. Get in contact with the CIA and they should be able to install you in a 'troubled' nation just like Salvador Montalban. Watch out though, if you get too comfortable they may send in a suave Spanish super-agent like Rico Rodriguez to take you down.

Answered mostly (b)?

You took this test more seriously than we anticipated. Try it again.

Answered mostly (c)?

You're Pauly Shore, or you think you're Pauly Shore. Either way you're in a lot of trouble. Seek help immediately, buuuuuddy.



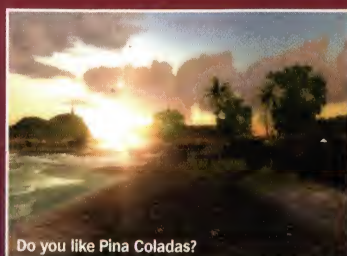
Watch out – it's a jungle out there...



Don't cross the mean streets of San Esperito



The urban jungle is just as dangerous



Do you like Pina Colodas?



His other plane's an F-15. No, seriously – it is!

Best described as equal parts El Mariachi and James Bond, Rico oozes cool...



IN THIS ISSUE:
 We get excited about
OBLIVION;
 check out the best
GAMING PROJECTORS;
 and give the feature
 review treatment to
GTA: SAN ANDREAS

PLUS:
 Rise of Nations 2
DoW: Winter Assault
 Psychonauts
Boiling Point
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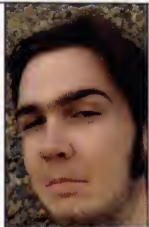


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WELCOME!

Well, after last issue's craziness we were looking forward to a calm, post-E3 period with plenty of relaxing mid-afternoon game sessions. Relaxing, however, is not a word in Paul's vocabulary (neither are 'astringer' or 'bromopnea' – but that's beside the point). He's been kicking our collective arses in Tekken 5 all month long, and he can sure rub it in! He went a little crazy during SingStar Pop though – we had to pull the plug when he requested a wig and a wind-tunnel. He's a worry, that dude...

LUKE REILLY
REVIEWS EDITOR

REVIEW CHARTER

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE's reviews are the best in the business. Our squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone. And we love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our comments and scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here in Australia and overseas. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

- 10/10** Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
- 09/10** A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
- 08/10** Highly recommended
- 07/10** Good, solid fare that's well worth a look
- 06/10** Better than average, and acceptable for hardcore fans of the genre
- 05/10** An average game
- 04/10** Poor, but still with the odd moment
- 03/10** Extremely disappointing
- 02/10** To be avoided
- 01/10** Beer mat

THE OPS2 AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.



TEKKEN 5

Namco brings back the biff – the King of Iron Fist rules the ring once more!

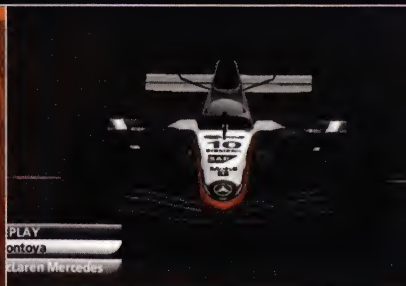
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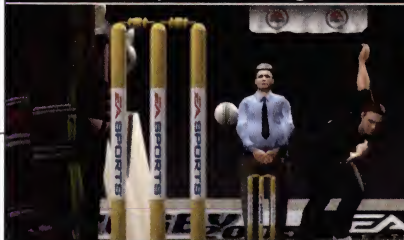
MOH: EUROPEAN ASSAULT **62**
Lock 'n' load, boys – we're heading out!



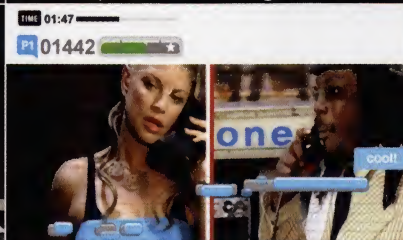
BATMAN BEGINS **64**
Did this super-zero ruin a damn good movie?



FORMULA ONE 05 **66**
Has SCEE found a formula that works?



CRICKET 2005 **68**
Better than a cricket ball in your middle stump!



SINGSTAR POP **70**
Serenade the neighbours with this corker!



DYNASTY WARRIORS 5 **71**
This is one dynasty that never gets old!



He's gotta get himself a proper belt. What is this? Amateur hour?

What is this a standing contest? Kick his ass!

"Nice skirt, Phoenix. Did you mum make it for you?"

BEAT 'EM UP

TEKKEN 5

The Iron Fist is back... and we don't mean your boss

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY ■ DEVELOPER: NAMCO ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.tekken5.namco.com ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: YES ■ SURROUND SOUND: YES ■ ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

The original Tekken debuted exactly 10 years ago on the Playstation and it's been quite a journey ever since. The game has more downs than ups especially with the last release, Tekken 4, which experimented with new gameplay styles that weren't loved by anyone.

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN

Mortal Kombat: Deception

WORSE THAN

Soul Calibur II

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME

The graphics are as good as they'll be on this generation.

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX

Keep your day job and get rid of the third-person beat-em-up.

Tekken has been like a younger brother to us in many ways – it's always been there when we've needed something to beat the crap out of. Unfortunately, after Tekken 4, it didn't look like the series could hold up against the rock-solid quality of *Soul Calibur II*. The good news is that for Tekken 5, what Namco has done goes far beyond any plastic surgery done on the likes of *Cher*. Namco has rejuvenated the series by going back to its roots and keeping things simple.

QUITE A SHINER

When we first booted up Tekken 5 and watched the opening FMV we were confused. It showed Heihachi and Jin waking up next to each other holding their heads like they had a killer hangover. It reminded us of the story of Tristan and Naz waking up next to each other after a few too many tequila slammers – although they're still saying nothing happened. As the movie continued we soon discovered, after an amazing fight scene, that Jin is setting up Heihachi to be killed. Check

out our playable demo to see if he gets the job done. When it concluded we found ourselves fantasising about the PS3. What we just witnessed was what the gameplay in Tekken Next will look like. Naturally we weren't expecting Tekken 5 to match the PS3's graphics, but we also thought it had about as much chance of delivering the best graphics ever seen on PS2 as Tom Cruise had scoring with Katie Holmes – who saw that one coming. Boy, were we wrong! There's just so much in Tekken 5 that makes you go, "wow, how can it look so good?" There are arenas that have individual flower petals floating through the air, icebergs with such detail that you can make out each tiny little crystal and glass roofs that crack every time you land on them (it's actually distracting because you're worried about falling through to your death). There's so much detail packed into each arena that it's hard to even scratch the surface. Chuck in the demo disc you'll know what we're talking about. We've never seen anything like this.

As for the combatants, it's like an NBA

All Star basketball game with all your Tekken favourites in the one place at the one time. There's Nina Williams, Paul Phoenix, Kazuya, Marshall Law, Steve Fox, Christie Monteiro (Phil's favourite) and many more returning to kick some booty. They all feel instantly familiar because the same combos still work but there are a few new maneuvers here to get to grips with. Although this should take Tekken fans less time to master than a kid learning to tie his shoelaces. If you're after some fresh blood then there's three new guys entering the tournament this year: Asuka Kazama, Feng Wei, and Raven. Asuka and Feng are top-shelf, with fighting styles similar to some of the old school vets, but Raven is painfully slow and is little more than a punching bag who looks like Wesley Snipes. The bears, pandas and other creatures from the wild are also back, and no, we still have no idea why they're here. We're hoping for the love of God that they're put down for Tekken Next.

THE SIMPLE LIFE

Thankfully the overly complicated combo



Something's wrong here... They should be naked



He kicked the flu right out of her



"Hey where'd my shirt go?"



"How did she know my Achilles Heel was my only weakness?"



The old cocaine in the eye trick... classic



Raven shows off his breakdancing moves

FUN FACT!

The Tekken movie is currently in production and due out in 2006. No high profile actors are signed yet though.

system from Tekken 4 has been dropped like a cheating girlfriend in favour of the system featured in every other Tekken game. This is one of the best combo systems in fighting games because anyone from a four-year old who can't spell their name to someone who's played through the entire series can pick it up and play it right away. Button mashers can go nuts and pull off a range of combos against players who actually know what they're doing. And if you want to learn the combos then it's not as hard as learning how to run a NASA space station. Some characters have up to 130 different moves and they're all just basic button combinations that take minutes to master. You couldn't ask for anything easier, unless Paris Hilton's in town.

The series has always had an arcade feel, since that's where the series originated, and Tekken 5 is no different. The Arcade mode has been given a slight tweak to make it feel more like you're in a real arcade with a bunch of kids wagging school. Rather than just beat the crap out of character after character you'll now have your own profile and take on AI profiles. At the end of each fight you'll get to choose your next opponent from three profiles. Naturally you'll begin ranked as a beginner, then as you win more fights your ranking will increase until you're crowned the King of the Iron Fist. You can literally spend hours in this mode – it's like a real arcade but without the smell of BO and cigarette smoke filling the air.

The Story mode is also back, but the only thing that's changed this time is the plot. There's only



This is why you should never light your farts

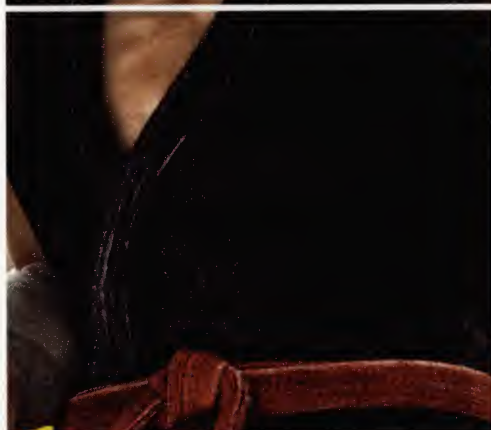
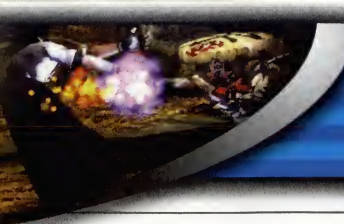
eight battles per character, with each one getting progressively harder. It's worth checking out each character's story because it doesn't take long to finish and the final scene is as hilarious as Anthony Mundine's rapping.

If you're after a real story-based adventure then there's also the Devil Within mode, which continues Jin's saga. However, this is probably the weakest mode in the game. It's basically what Tekken would be if it were a beat 'em up, minus all the cool stuff. You simply go through a level full of massive rooms, defeating armies of enemies. It takes about as long as Phill's 'intimate time with the ladies' for this to become boring and repetitive. Mainly because every single room and hallway looks exactly the same and all the enemies are identical twins that can be beaten by using the same button. Let's just say the best thing about the Devil Within mode is that there's a "return to the main menu" option.

OLD SCHOOL

One sweet-ass feature of Tekken 5 is being able to relive the glory days of the original Tekken, Tekken 2 and Tekken 3. You can see how far the series come when playing the original. It is so slow and there aren't a lot of combos. The series did get a lot better with its sequels though. You'll also find there's not much of a difference in button combinations between this and Tekken 5, which is both cool and kind of worrying at the same time.





He might be old but he's still hot!

FUN FACT!

The voice of Nina Williams, Lisle Wilkerson, has also done work in films like *Lost In Translation* and games including *Rumble Roses* and *Crazy Taxi*. She's also a babe.

Probably the newest addition to the series is also the most unusual one. With every game these days being about pimping your ride or jazzing up your main man then it should be no surprise that *Tekken* has followed suit. By destroying the opposition in the Arcade mode you can earn *Tekken* bucks to deck out your favourite characters with crazy new threads. Some of the alternate outfits are more revealing than a Kylie Minogue video clip, but there's also a lot of crap that you'd only find on sale in a \$2 shop – so most of it's not even worth the trouble. However, the system does give you the opportunity to personalise your favourite star any way you want – even if that means wearing a pink thong (Tristan says they're really comfortable).

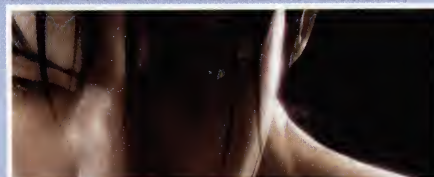


Tekken 5 is without a doubt one of the best fighting games on the PS2. Even with *Soul Calibur III* on the way, it's definitely worth forking over the cash for. In the ring it plays just as well as *Soul Calibur II* and it looks better than any PS2 game out there. So why isn't it a 10? Like that song from Good Charlotte, "it's the little things that always get you down". Little things like the collision detection. There'll be times where Jin's fist will go through Nina's head without making any impact. Don't get us wrong, we'd love to see Jin inside Nina, but not like this. You don't feel anything from the combos when this happens and it takes away from what should be a bruising experience. Also, why has Namco never changed the music? Why do they think anyone likes this techno-rock generic beat? It seems to be in every Namco game and it drives us nuts. How about mixing it up with some other tunes? Something bad-ass to suit the fighting genre. It'd be so much better than the 'untz, untz, untz' crap that sounds like it should be in a Subaru WRX with a bunch of P-players rather than a fighting game.

As we mentioned, they're only little things, but they do take away from the experience. While it may have let us down before, it looks like *Tekken 5* has learned its lesson and come back stronger than ever. The brawler has so much more to offer than previous *Tekken* titles and delivers in almost every area. Combat that anyone can learn and master, challenging game modes that will waste hours of your life and graphics that are in a league of its own. It may have scored less than *Soul Calibur II* but in some areas it does manage to out-perform the classic. If you're looking to update your fighting game or you're just looking to take out your frustration on something because your boss is a son of a man-nipple then you can't go wrong with *Tekken 5*. **Paul Frew**

TEKKEN NEXT

We're counting the seconds until this one comes out. When watching the opening movie for *Tekken 5* we couldn't stop thinking about the footage we saw at E3 for *Tekken Next*. Just look at these smoking images and you'll be as excited as us. 210 sleeps to go...



X OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	10	They're simply the best, better than all the rest
SOUND	07	Can someone change the station?
GAMEPLAY	09	Back to basics, solid Tekken combat
LIFESPAN	05	Plenty of unlockables to keep you interested

Tekken 5 is a major improvement over *Tekken 4* and is a must own fighter for anyone with a PS2.

09

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Play-test



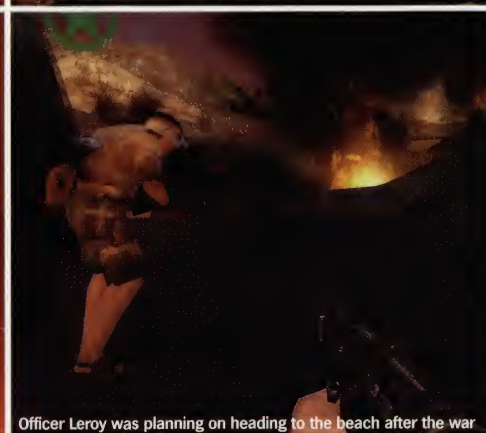
TROPHY AWARD!
Best sound effects in a war game!



"Watch me shoot the towel off his head"



Explosions: the vital ingredient of any good screenshot



Officer Leroy was planning on heading to the beach after the war

FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER

MEDAL OF HONOR: EUROPEAN ASSAULT

Will the war ever end?

DISTRIBUTOR: EA ■ DEVELOPER: EA LOS ANGELES ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.moh.ea.com ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: NO ■ SURROUND SOUND: YES ■ ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

The Medal of Honor series needs no introduction. After ten successful games, the series is now a war veteran. While it's only improved gradually with every addition, perhaps we'll see something even bigger with the recently revealed Medal of Honor: Airborne for PS3.

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
FIGHTING IN IRAQ

WORSE THAN
BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME
War has never sounded so good

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX
Better missions, special effects, and more open missions

There have been more war games released for PS2 in the last few years than there were bullets fired in World War II. Some have survived to become true soldiers of the genre. Others have been too bad that they lay lifeless in the mud where they belong. Unfortunately, while the Medal of Honor series has dodged bullets in the past, this time around it's taken some shrapnel and will have to fight hard to win this war.

What lets down *European Assault* is its missions. After completing nail biting missions in games like *Brother in Arms: Road to Hill 30* and *Call of Duty: Finest Hour*, where you had to rescue fallen comrades and rush the frontlines, it's disappointing to play through missions that are all about blowing up fuel containers and securing easy targets like bunkers. Sure, blowing stuff up is hoot, but this is a WWII game. We want to be knee deep in mud-filled trenches, we want to go toe to toe with armies of Nazis and we want to play a part in missions that actually have something to do with the war.

So what if we blow up a fuel tanker? What's it got to do with World War II? Does it mean Hitler can't drive his car anymore because he has no fuel to fill it up? We don't think so. Why don't we leave trivial stuff like that to the fresh recruits so we can start taking out real targets? Maybe if the explosions were a little more spectacular it wouldn't be such an issue. However, because we've been spoiled with great flame and fireball effects from games like *Metal Gear Solid 3* and *Cold Winter*, when we see an explosion then we expect it to burn our retinas. You don't get anything like that in *European Assault*.

However, even with these problems a lot of improvements have been made since the previous MOH outing. For instance the AI has smartened up and doesn't run at you kamikaze-style like before (admittedly that was kind of a Japanese thing, though). They'll set up strategic positions and take cover to avoid fire. Their aim has also improved so they don't shoot like Stevie Wonder and they will use grenades to force you out in the open. You can kick grenades back at them

like a soccer ball if you're close enough, just don't expect to bend it like Beckham.

The improvement in AI actually makes you feel like you're right in there because Jerry will do everything to avoid copping a bullet in the face. You can't go up against these Krauts Schwarzenegger-style either, otherwise you'll end up resembling a piece of Swiss cheese. You need some strategy in place otherwise the only gun shots you'll hear will be the 21 gun salute at your funeral. If your heart does happen to give out on you then you won't be going back to the last checkpoint like before. There are no checkpoints in *European Assault*. If you buy the farm the revive unit will come out and, er, revive you. However, you can only use the revive unit a few times or you'll be back at the start of the level to do it all over again. You can pick up revive points throughout the level by performing acts of bravery such as saving a comrade from an early grave and helping out another squad, but they're like lifelines in *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* – you need to use them wisely to try and



The smoke signal is like the bat signal, except when Paul sees it he smokes the nearest guy



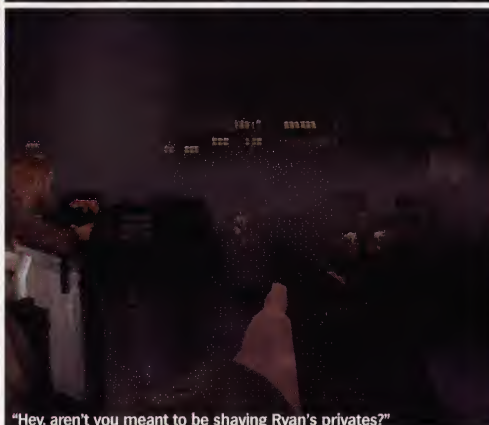
As you can see, fishing is a little different in Europe



"Hey Fritz! Stick this in your pipe and smoke it!"



These guys are hunting down ski bunnies



"Hey, aren't you meant to be shaving Ryan's privates?"



Looks like he's got some time to kill

avoid a date with the Grim Reaper.

Perhaps the biggest improvement is the inclusion of optional tertiary missions that occur on the battlefield. There have been many complaints over the years that the *MOH* series has been too linear. *European Assault* still feels linear but the optional missions help flesh it out. There's no extra path or different location to discover to complete these – they're usually off to the left or the right of the screen, but you'll be told over radio communication where the problem is. It's a good idea to complete all the tasks because you'll be graded at the end based on how many of the mission you completed. It does make the missions last longer than usual but like the primary missions, they're still unexciting and sometimes you wonder why you bothered going to all that trouble.

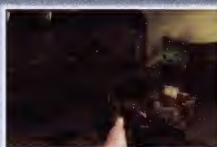
Unfortunately, you'll probably feel the same about the multiplayer mode. There's no online mode in *European Assault* and the game types are no different to any other FPS out there. There doesn't seem to be any attempt to make the multiplayer a fresh experience that could compete against other classic multiplayer FPSs like *Cold Winter* or *Timesplitters: Future Perfect*. It's as disappointing as finding out that Jessica Alba has a boyfriend.

Without a doubt, *European Assault* captures what it feels like to be in the middle of a war. However, that's pretty common these days. You just need lots of guns, planes dropping bombs and grenades blowing dirt up in your face. Every war game out there does that. What makes a war game great is the feeling of putting your life on the line in missions that could change the shift of the war. That's what *European Assault* doesn't do. It doesn't make you feel like what you're doing is important to victory for your country. While the series continues to evolve, there's still plenty of

room for improvement – like graphics, special effects, more open levels and, most importantly, multiplayer. These should be part of the foundations for any game, whether it's a platformer or a RPG. Some might be satisfied with the improvements to the series but we're guessing many will be expecting a lot more from the fifth *MOH* title. **Paul Frew**

"FOLLOW ME TO CERTAIN DEATH"

Another inclusion in *European Assault* is the ability to command a squad to watch your back. However, you'll end up watching their backs most of the time. Your squad members always seem to be a tad slow and don't seem to know much about taking cover. You can give your squad basic commands like hold position, secure area and open fire, but most of the time it's just easier to let them follow behind you. If they do get low on health, it's also your job to supply them with health packs. It doesn't matter so much if they die but sparing their life will earn you a revive point, which is priceless.



OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	06	Enemies look the same and effects are B grade
SOUND	10	The greatest sounding war yet
GAMEPLAY	06	An improvement on previous <i>MOH</i>
LIFESPAN	07	Longer missions and plenty of items to unlock

European Assault is still a solid war game but we were expecting a lot more.

06

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

War heroes are few and far between, but here are some of the greatest war heroes known around the world.



Audie Murphy (*To Hell and Back*)

The most decorated soldier in WWII whose many acts of bravery and heroism during the battles in Italy, France and Germany are well documented. He was credited with killing over 240 enemy soldiers and received two dozen of the highest medals the US and France can bestow, culminating with the Congressional Medal of Honor. He then starred in a movie about himself. Buried at Arlington, only JFK's grave is visited more often. Famous quote: "The true meaning of America, you ask? It's in a Texas rodeo, in a policeman's badge, in the sound of laughing children, in a political rally, in a newspaper... In all these things, and many more, you'll find America. In all these things, you'll find freedom. And freedom is what America means to the world. And to me."

John Rambo (*Rambo*)

A former green beret and Medal of Honor recipient. Rambo could destroy an entire army without even breaking a sweat. Famous quote: "You know there's more men out there and you know where they are. Find 'em. Or I'll find you."

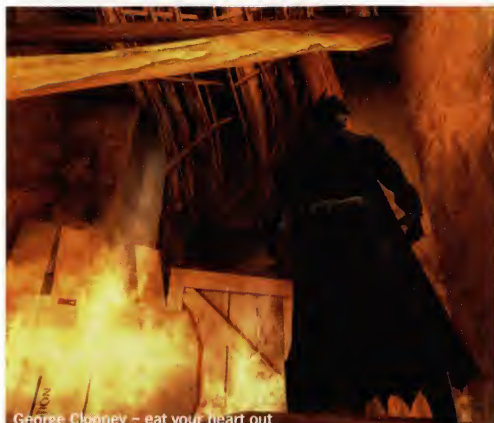
John Matrix (*Commando*)

Even though he retired from the Army to look after his little girl he's still the best there is. No army in the world could take him down. He can carry a tree on his arm for God's sake! Famous quote: "You're a funny man, Suily, I like you. That's why I'm going to kill you last."

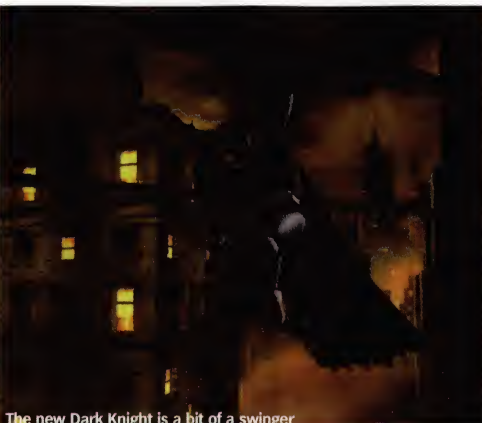


Topper Harley (*Hot Shots*)

Lt Harley was originally a fighter pilot but in *Hot Shots 2* he went in to Iraq on a SOCOM-style mission to rescue an old friend. He sure can cook up a mean breakfast. Famous quote: "Playing to lose is like sleeping with your sister. Sure she's a great piece of tail with a blouse full of goodies, but it's just illegal. Then you get into that whole inbred thing. Kids with no teeth who do nothing but play the banjo and eat apple sauce through a straw..."



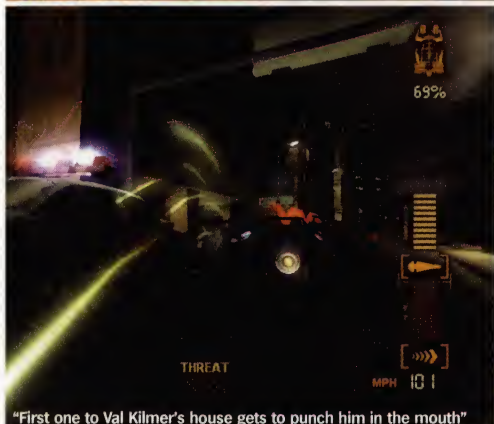
George Clooney – eat your heart out



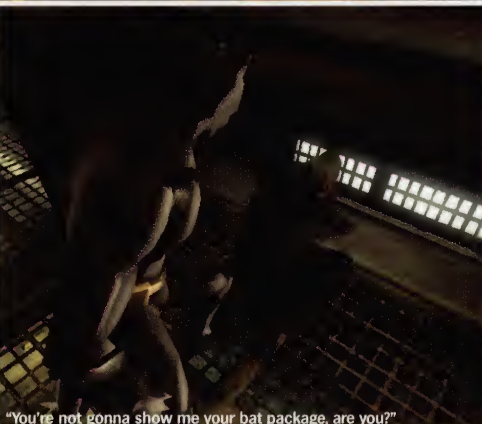
The new Dark Knight is a bit of a swinger



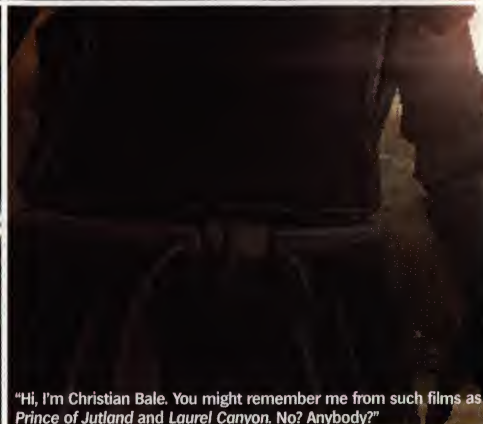
"Hi, I'm Christian Bale. You might remember me from such films as Prince of Jutland and Laurel Canyon. No? Anybody?"



"First one to Val Kilmer's house gets to punch him in the mouth"



"You're not gonna show me your bat package, are you?"



"Hi, I'm Christian Bale. You might remember me from such films as Prince of Jutland and Laurel Canyon. No? Anybody?"

ACTION-ADVENTURE

BATMAN BEGINS

And the end can't come soon enough...

DISTRIBUTOR: EA ■ DEVELOPER: EUROCOM ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1 ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.batmanbegins.ea.com ■ 60HZ MODE: No ■ WIDESCREEN: Yes ■ SURROUND SOUND: Yes ■ ONLINE: No

BACK STORY

Batman Begins is based on the recent film of the same name, itself a prequel to the Tim Burton movie from 1989. Developer Eurocom has been creating videogames since the Nintendo Entertainment System, and is frankly old enough to know better.

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
CATWOMAN

WORSE THAN
SPIDER-MAN 2

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME
The graphics and sound


WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX
Everything else

Out of all the comic book superheroes, Batman is the one we can identify with the most. He's not an alien like Superman, he's not a geek teenager like Spider-Man, and he's not a portable cassette-playing device like er, Walkman. He's just a guy. Just an ordinary guy who collects antiques, dresses up in skin-tight black leather every night and hangs out with a 'boy wonder' called Robin. Hmm... this isn't really sounding too convincing on paper. Let's just go with the fact that he's rich and drives a really cool car.

Done right, a Batman videogame would be amazing. Can you imagine hanging out at Wayne Manor, constantly knocking things over just so you can kick Alfred in the arse when he goes to pick them up, and inviting busloads of supermodels around to take turns on your Bat-pole? Then, when you saw the Bat-signal glistening off midnight clouds you could suit up, jump into the Batmobile and head into Gotham City to solve some crime, Caped Crusader-style.

SIMON SAYS


Sadly *Batman Begins* is not that game and, as it's licensed from the blockbuster film of the same name, it unsurprisingly follows an extremely linear plot path peppered with video sequences lifted straight from the movie. In fact, it could possibly be the most constrictively linear action adventure title ever produced for the PS2.

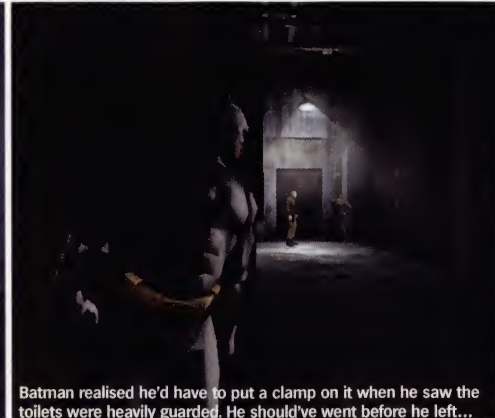
As the Dark Knight, you'd expect to be able to use his most identifiable gadget – the Batarang – at any moment, to fling at unsuspecting villains and perhaps knock weapons out of their hands, right? Wrong, at least according to the developers. The only times you can use the Batarang is when a small prompt flashes up in the top right corner of the screen, after which a press of the  button triggers a scripted sequence like shattering a window with it or cutting down a chandelier. You never actually get to choose what you want to aim at, and not once in the entire game can you use the Batarang to target enemies directly, instead you can only stun them by hitting nearby

fire extinguishers or cause them to fall by knocking out support struts under the platform they're standing on.

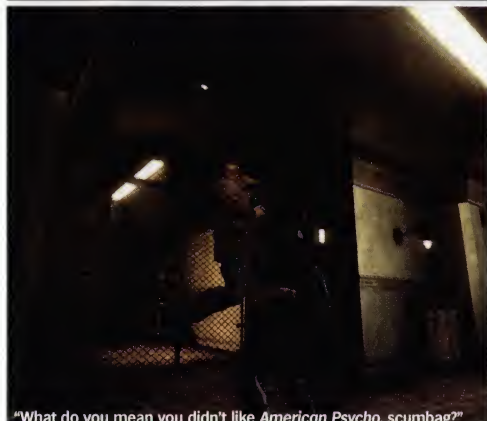
Likewise, Batman's grappling hook can only be used when the game tells you to, and, in fact, at no point in the game are you actually given a choice in how you wish to proceed. The flow of the game can basically be summed up as: fight bad guys, press grappling hook button now, press Batarang button now, run/creep for about ten seconds and repeat. At one point during our playtest we actually found ourselves deliberately leaping off a skyscraper rooftop just because it was an action that the game didn't force us to do – *Batman Begins* is a game designed to be so oppressive that it actually drives you to commit in-game suicide.

FEAR AND LOATHING

Hand-to-hand combat in *Batman Begins* is woefully simplistic and repetitive. It basically consists of mashing the punch and kick buttons to pummel your opponent until the ever-helpful on-screen prompt tells you that you can press  to execute an uninspired



Batman realised he'd have to put a clamp on it when he saw the toilets were heavily guarded. He should've went before he left...



"What do you mean you didn't like *American Psycho*, scumbag?"



"What am I up to? Nothing, I'm just hanging around – I swear!"



The driving sections smack of *Burnout 3* – only they're not as good

finishing move. Occasionally you'll get to interrogate an enemy, but not in an interactive *Punisher*-style way, you instead press **ⓐ** a predetermined number of times until the vulnerable villain coughs up a door pass code or something of equivalent importance.

In an attempt to add depth to the combat, the developers have implemented a fear-based system which directly affects how confident enemies will be in confronting you. Sneaking around in the shadows and knocking over shelves or causing hanging crates to fall will spook your would-be combatants, and then assaulting them with smoke bombs or flash-bang grenades will put them even further on edge.

But if anything, maxing out the fear meter works against you, as it just means first you have to annoyingly chase frightened enemies before you knock the stuffing out of them, instead of them coming to you for the one-sided beating. The only real advantage of the fear system is that nervous enemies automatically drop their weapons. Instead of, you know, holding onto them even tighter. Getting shot is a real problem because although the film made clear Batman's suit is bulletproof, it looks like the developers missed the memo. In order to force you to approach every situation in the only way intended Batman goes down like a drunken cheerleader after only one or two bullets. Not cool.

BRUCE WAYNE OR SAM FISHER?

Batman Begins doesn't just borrow elements from Ubisoft's *Splinter Cell*; it unashamedly tears the clasp off Sam Fisher's bag of tricks and cleans the whole thing out. Doors can be peeked through with a fibre optic cable, locks can be picked (but with an interface far more undeveloped than Fisher's cool vibration-sensitive method), your stance can be switched to a stealth mode in order to creep up on guards, pipes can be scaled and so on.

None of it is executed with even half the style of the gritty stealth classic, and the pipe-climbing and hand-over-hand shimmying is animated so strangely that it makes our caped hero look more like an Apeman than anything else.

If ever there is an opportunity for game designers to get really creative within the action genre, it's in producing intense boss battles. Unlike regular enemies, bosses should have complex attack routines that need to be learned and weaknesses that need to be identified in order for you to beat them.

There are only two real bosses in the entire *Batman Begins* experience, and embarrassingly they each require around ten seconds of button mashing to overcome – like every other enemy in the game. There is absolutely nothing that stands out about the boss battles, and the only reason you can tell that you're even fighting a boss is because they look different to the small handful of generic enemy types that populate the rest of the levels.

Still, the graphics are a positive – *Batman Begins* is an undeniably good-looking game for the most part. The lighting and textures are some of the best we've ever seen, and there are a few occasions when you're dangling hundreds of metres in the air, above traffic blurring in the streets below and surrounded by the imposing Gotham cityscape, that could possibly take your breath away.

But if videogames were just meant to be watched we wouldn't have control pads, and the fact remains that watching someone play *Batman Begins* is far more entertaining than playing it for yourself. However, either way you'll still grow tired of the fact that each in-game sequence is far too similar to the next, and ultimately it's a pretty sad indictment on an action adventure game when you can confidently say that its coolest moments occur during the non-playable cut-scenes. **✶** *Tristan Ogilvie*

BEST BATMAN BADDIES



1. The Joker

Still the reason that clowns make us uncomfortable (might also have something to do with the time we walked in on Ronald McDonald giving the Hamburgler a Quarter Pounding).



2. Poison Ivy

Her weapons are entirely botanical and her kiss is deadly. Which is cool with us, we don't kiss on the lips yet anyway (eww, girls are gross!).



3. The Penguin

Dresses like the Monopoly Man and commands an army of homicidal penguins. There's no joke that needs to be made, really.



4. Scarecrow

Wears a Hessian bag on his head and emits an offensive gas, not unlike Paul's ex-girlfriend (he's totally going to take her back).



5. The Riddler

Dresses only in green and talks in riddles – kind of like your drunk Irish uncle on St Patrick's Day, only saner and doesn't smell like burning hair.

OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	09	Gorgeous environments, animation is a bit off
SOUND	08	Great voice cast, atmospheric music
GAMEPLAY	05	Fine, if you're not good at making decisions
LIFESPAN	05	Can be knocked over in one evening

Batman Begins looks stunning – fortunate, because you'll spend a lot more time watching idly rather than doing anything yourself.

06

Play-test

PlayStation 2
BRONZE AWARD



RACING

FORMULA ONE 05

Strap in and grab pole!

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY ■ DEVELOPER: SCEE ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-10 ONLINE) ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.scee.com ■ 60HZ MODE: YES ■ WIDESCREEN: YES ■ SURROUND SOUND: YES ■ ONLINE: YES

BACK STORY

This is only the latest Formula One notch on the belt of SCEE's own Studio Liverpool – it's been responsible for the franchise for some time now. Formula One 04 was somewhat disappointing but the boys went back to the drawing board for this year's version.

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
FORMULA ONE 04

WORSE THAN
V8 SUPERCARS 2

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME

Fantastic presentation and superb attention to detail

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX

Bigger, better crashes and more of them!

If you wanted to start your own Formula One team you'd need to cough up a lot of dough. Cars, drivers, tools, mechanics, big-bosomed team mascots – they all cost money, and cigarette company endorsements will only go so far. By the time you get to the £25 million pound 'deposit' for F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone's back pocket, not only will you be reaching for the latest conversion rates (hint: our dollar buys about 40 pence on a good day) you'll also be reaching for your first born's kidneys hoping to make a quick score from some black market organ thieves.

No. Owning your own Formula One team is out of reach for all but the richest eccentrics among us. It is, of course, the single most expensive sport in the world. Fortunately, a far cheaper alternative is available – *Formula One 05* contains all this year's teams and tracks, including the new Istanbul circuit, and doesn't cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

It doesn't hurt that it isn't too shabby in the gameplay department either.

ONE FOR THE MONEY, TWO FOR THE SHOW

Formula One 04 was a bit of a let down for fans of the enduring motorsport. It had plenty of frills but it lacked a decent challenge and trivialised the racing experience. We guess it was an attempt to broaden the game's audience, but F1 pundits are a hardcore bunch and desire a little more substance from their sims. It seems SCEE has learnt from this error and *Formula One 05* successfully spans the gap between an accessible arcade racer to a razor-sharp simulation.

Formula One 05 can be as difficult or as easy as you want it to be. Like cruising to victory in every race, maintaining that perfect line at all times and bouncing off your competition like a hyperactive child in a jumping castle? *F1 05* has the settings you need. Like being in the state of mental alertness you can only get from mainlining Red Bull into your eyeballs and feeling the back of your car twitch as you caress it into a sweeping corner? Turn off the driving

aids and see how long you last before you lock yourself in your room, crying like Paul after he got dumped... again.

Intuitive steering and braking aids, plus a virtual racing line that dynamically changes based on your speed, all combine to keep even the most inept F1 wannabes on the straight and narrow. On the flip side, obsessive F1 fans will be in heaven trying to keep tarmac beneath their 300kmph ballistic missile as they scream along in a plume of spray on a soggy day. It's amazing how quick a hairpin corner can sneak up on you in broad daylight, let alone in the rainy mist behind a rival car.

It can be hard. It can be very hard. We won't tell anybody if you turn a few of those handy driving aids back on so you can have a chance to scull some champagne on the podium. However, despite the increase in difficulty, *F1 05* is a much better game for it. Traditionally, F1 games garner a fairly selective audience – so this increase in authenticity will do it a lot of favours amongst the diehards.



Looking for passing chances can drive you around the Benz!



If you can read this, you're too close!



Still feeling a need for speed?



Unlike real F1, you can expect more than just six cars to finish

NOW GO GO GO!

Speaking of authenticity, Studio Liverpool has gone to far greater lengths this time around to really immerse players in the glamorous world of F1 racing. An improved career mode offers a far deeper experience than last year's version. For the particularly obsessed, you can customise your driver to the extent of using an EyeToy to create a wheelman that resembles your handsome self. Once you've waded through the basics you'll need to score a contract by impressive interested teams. Don't bank on slipping into the bucket seat of a McLaren straight away – the big teams won't be interested until you strut your stuff in the minor league teams. All in all, career mode is the same old fairytale, but it's done quite well and F1 enthusiasts should find it far more engaging than previously. Studio Liverpool has added small touches like interactive pit-stops and a dynamic pre-race grid, a buzzing hive of mechanics, journalists, cameramen, minimum-wage lackeys wearing fiberglass F1 driver heads and the obligatory scantily clad grid-girls. These may be little more than window dressing, but they all add a little bit of extra credibility to the overall package.

One of the features that falls flat, however, is Television mode – where you get to watch a race unfold just like an actual broadcast. It's quaint, but if it's something you're into we think you need to take a long, hard look at yourself. We caught Tristan watching one during lunch and he's been too embarrassed to come out of the games room for a week.

A great career mode wouldn't mean much if all the authenticity disappeared the moment you got behind the wheel, and fortunately it doesn't. If you don't use the cockpit view in F1 games you should really make an effort to make the switch in F1 05. We've never driven a F1 car (not sober, anyway – there was this weekend at the Melbourne Grand Prix that

none of us really remember...) but a subtle camera shake and motion blur combined with a shifting camera that intuitively turns into corners makes F1 05 the closest thing to being on track in one of those speed machines. If you find these new touches distracting, you can simply switch them off for more conservative racing.

We don't doubt F1 05's online head-to-head mode and world-ranking ladders will prove popular, although it's probable that F1 fans from our neck of the woods will be significantly outnumbered by the European fanatics. A historic mode featuring classic Formula One cars and bonus tracks should pique the interest of old-skool F1 freaks and provide an attractive alternative once the novelty begins to wear thin.

If there's one criticism to be made of Formula One 05 though, it's that it's still a bit sterile. Unfortunately, a lot of that has to do with the fact F1 can be a fairly sterile motorsport. Any F1 fan will tell you Formula One is about grace and precision, and by itself this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Studio Liverpool has captured the essence of this, and F1 05 is a dedicated interpretation – albeit one that seems devoid of the bone-shuddering accidents that Channel 10 love to edit into their highlight reels. Motorsports that focus a little more on biff and muscle make for more exciting videogames – one of the main reasons games like V8 Supercars 2 sell their tits off. So while F1 05 is a very accessible and polished game, only dedicated F1 aficionados ought to purchase it – casual motorsports devotees would probably be best served by staying with Burnout 3, GT4 and V82. **Luke Reilly**

R.I.P.

Jochen Rindt was killed in an accident during practise for the 1970 Italian GP, but his lead was already unassailable – so he became motor racing's first posthumous World Champion.

F1 FOR DUMMIES

Know nothing about Formula One? Have no idea what the pretty-coloured flags being waved around mean? As always, OPS2 is here to hold your hand and help you through. Who was there to teach you how to ride a bike, or console you when you flushed your turtle down the toilet? You're right, it wasn't us – but we're here now, so get off our backs okay?

YELLOW FLAG – Indicates danger on the track.
"Some idiot just buried himself into a tyre wall – do us a favour and try not to run over any race marshals, okay?"

GREEN FLAG – Indicates the end of danger, the track is clear.
"We've removed the flaming wreckage, try not to make a mess."

BLUE FLAG – Displayed to a driver about to be lapped.
"Pull to the side you slow bastard, you're embarrassing yourself."

MECHANICAL PROBLEM FLAG – Warns driver of a mechanical problem with the car.
"Dude, there's something trailing off the back of your car – we don't really know what it is, but it looks important."

BLACK FLAG – Hailing from Los Angeles and fronted at one point by the neckless Henry Rollins, Black Flag were the definitive west coast hardcore punk band. Their music walked a fine line between heavy metal and experimental noise and jazz.

RED FLAG – The race has been stopped.
"Somebody just died, or it just started snowing. Or both."

CHEQUERED FLAG – Displayed at the end of the race.
"We know only one of you won, but the rest of you will feel much better after you spend the rest of the week on your team yachts making love to your physically perfect Scandinavian girlfriends."

OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	09	Superb presentation and slick visuals
SOUND	08	Authentic and convincing, lacks decent tunes
GAMEPLAY	07	As challenging as you make it, still slightly sterile
LIFESPAN	07	Will keep you busy between real race weekends

Essential for F1 fans – the closest you'll get to the cockpit of a Ferrari without being shot by Michael Schumacher's bodyguards.

08

Play-test



New Zealand cricketers, is there anything worse?



Big red balls, just like the ones Paul has after a night out with the "boys"



"Hey everyone, come see how good I look in this light"



"Oh not another six, do you know hard it is to find the ball when you do that?"



Big white balls, just like Luke's when he doesn't pick up



"Wait, timeout, I've thrown out my back again"

SPORTS

CRICKET 2005

Classic catch or a costly dropped chance?

DISTRIBUTOR: EA ■ DEVELOPER: EA CANADA ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ OUT: OUT NOW ■ WEB: www.eaplay.com/australia ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: YES ■ SURROUND SOUND: YES ■ ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Cricket 2004 built on the foundations evident in Cricket 2002 by introducing both English and Australian domestic teams, create-a-player modes and Multitap support. What it didn't do was address the frustrating bugs that plagued the original game.

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
CRICKET 2004

WORSE THAN
SHANE WARNE CRICKET
(PSONE)

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME

The visuals are super slick, a few of the bugs are gone

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX

The commentary, the AI and the overall gameplay

In international cricket, Australia has been without a consistent rival for quite a long time now. Teams like India and South Africa have been brilliant in patches over the past decade, but the untouchable Aussie team has continued to roll through win after one-sided win on a regular basis. Now a confident young English team has risen through the world rankings to be a close number two to Ricky Ponting's all-star squad, and these fresh-faced Poms are set to put up the biggest fight in a long while in the 2005 Ashes series.

Which is a pretty interesting parallel to the state of cricket games on the PS2. EA's Cricket series has dominated the genre over the past five years, but unlike the Australian team, it hasn't been through a lack of decent competition; it's been through a lack of any competition at all. Now finally we've got *Ricky Ponting International Cricket* from Codemasters on the horizon, and it's got a very good chance of achieving the Botham-esque all-round greatness that its PSone predecessor enjoyed (then known as *Shane*

Warne Cricket). So the pressure is on *Cricket 2005* to step up to the crease and knock it into the stands.

PITCH REPORT

Like this year's rugby game, *Cricket 2005* has been treated to a massive graphical overhaul. At last the players actually look like their real life counterparts (some more so than others), and the animation flows more freely than VB in the change rooms at the end of a day's play. There's certainly been a lot more personality injected into the proceedings, particularly during wicket celebrations where fielders piggyback each other and slap each other playfully on the backside (not that we're into that sort of thing – we much prefer the 'inside edge' of your 'fine legs', ladies). Bowlers discuss tactics with their captains in between deliveries, fielders perform stretching exercises out in the deep and batsmen lunge desperately to avoid close run-outs.

All the statistical tools such as the wagon wheel, 'manhattan' bar graph and heartbeat

run rate charts return from *Cricket 2004*, only now they're presented in a way that you can actually read them. A new feature that sounds great on paper is the video highlights package shown in between innings, but unfortunately it's not so great in practice, as it only shows around four wickets maximum per innings, and not necessarily the most spectacular ones.

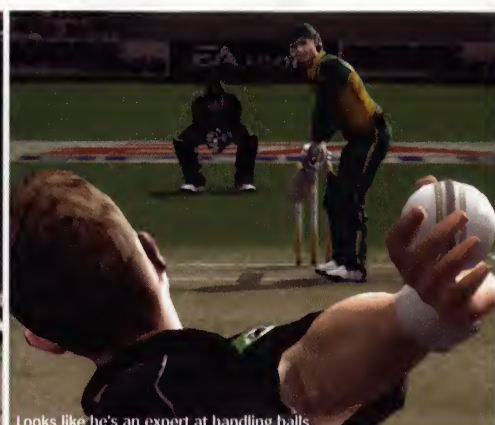
If you were expecting the commentary to be improved this time around, then you'd better slip in a hector protector because you're about to receive a sharp one square in the googlies. National treasure/aging muppet Richie Benaud and not-so-famous radio guy Jim Maxwell are occupying the commentary box once again, repeating the exact same boring, disjointed comments they've been spouting in the last two EA cricket games. We're skeptical as to whether the developers even bothered to get them to record new dialogue, save for maybe a handful of new player's names. It's particularly disappointing knowing that *Ricky Ponting International Cricket* is set to feature six alternating



Game over West Indies, game over



The umpire is checking if it's still there



Looks like he's an expert at handling balls



He's flipping out with the flipper



"Don't think of sheep, don't think of sheep"

commentators including the ultimate odd couple, Bill Laurie and Tony Greig.

NOT AS IT SEAMS

Like the commentary, the batting in *Cricket 2005* remains relatively unchanged from the previous game. However, the bowling has received quite a few alterations. For starters, bowlers now have a confidence meter similar to the batsmen. The more non-scoring 'dot balls' you bowl, the more confident your bowler gets until eventually they're able to unleash a special delivery, such as a reverse-swinging Yorker if you're a paceman or a speedy Flipper if you're a spinner. Certain bowlers even have unique special deliveries, such as Murali's infamous Doosra, but the only problem with the bowling confidence is that it only lasts for one delivery at a time. So if you build it up, then unleash a fizzing bouncer that singes off a batsman's nose hairs, you'll still be back to your stock deliveries the very next ball – which doesn't really make sense. Your confidence shouldn't erode so quickly, unless of course you're dispatched for a boundary.

The other major difference to the bowling is the pitching reticule. Previously it slipped around the screen like hot butter on Teflon, making it extremely difficult to land any two deliveries in the same spot – just like in real life. The new reticule can be maneuvered with surprising precision, effectively transforming the majority of bowlers in the game into McGrath-style marksmen. This has a dramatic effect on batting; because when your mate is plunging ball after ball into your corridor of uncertainty (man, that sounds dirty) it becomes more difficult to 'get the runs' than if you were to stick a cork up your blockhole and go on an all-Weet-Bix diet.

The fielding AI is a double-edged sword. We're going

to ignore manual fielding entirely as it's still about as intuitive as Chinese maths, but the speed of the auto fielders has been ramped up significantly so they no longer dawdle or throw slow, looping returns to the keeper. This is great if you're bowling, but only adds to your frustration if you're on the batting side, as not only do you have to deal with pinpoint accuracy from the bowler but you're also faced with a field that's tougher to pierce than a nipple on a Rottweiler.

IT'S JUST NOT CRICKET

Cricket 2005 has a smaller bug collection than *Cricket 2004* (which is not to say there's not still some in there), and it certainly provides just about everything a cricket fan could ever ask for in terms of detailed player stats, authentically reproduced stadiums from all the major cricketing nations and basically enough cups, leagues and tournaments to keep you busy for several seasons to come. It's also the best looking game ever to be released in the genre, and the night games under lights look particularly genuine.

Unfortunately it's just not that much fun to play. The path that the ball takes from the bat when you play a shot seems horribly predetermined, AI-controlled opponents are still not smart enough to know if they're chasing a big or a small target and to adjust their tactics accordingly, and close decisions such as run outs or LBW's are often completely unconvincing. The latter may be true in the real thing too but questionable decisions happen far too often to be realistic in *Cricket 2005*; it's almost as though Hanse Cronje is umpiring every game. Cricket fans would be better off waiting until September to see if Codemasters can catch EA on the back foot and reclaim the cricketing crown with *Ricky Ponting*. **Tristan Ogilvie**

BENAUD'S BEAUTIES

He's the Yoda of cricket (both in terms of wisdom, and appearance) but his comments are duller than a dinner date with Ian Chappel in the PS2 game. We would have liked to have seen a few of these real-life Richie-isms Included in *Cricket 2005* (or indeed, any new dialogue at all).

"He's usually a good puller - but he couldn't get it up that time."

"His throw went absolutely nowhere near where it was going."

"Captaincy is 90 per cent luck and 10 per cent skill. But don't try it without that 10 per cent."

"Laird has been brought in to stand in the corner of the circle."

"The hallmark of a great captain is the ability to win the toss, at the right time."

"There was a slight interruption there for athletics" [referring to a stalker]

"The slow-motion replay doesn't show how fast the ball was really travelling."



OFFICIAL VERDICT

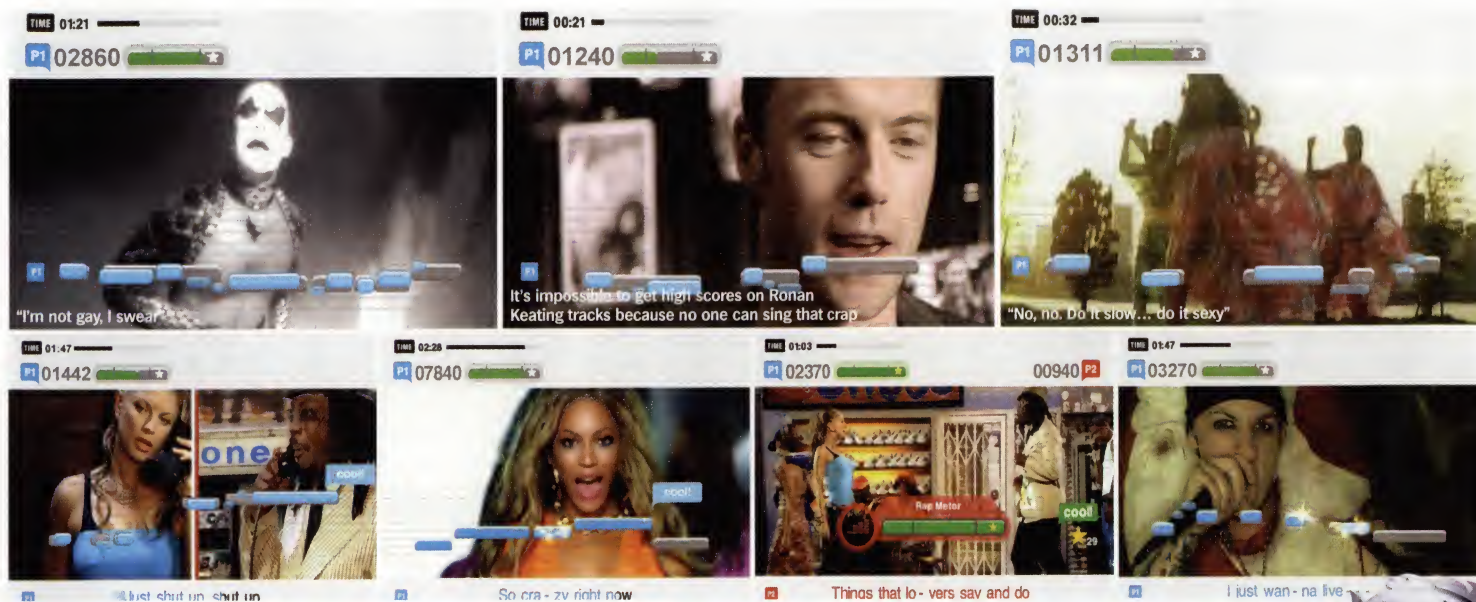
GRAPHICS	08	Smooth animation, mostly recognisable players
SOUND	05	Commentary is dire, crowd sounds are adequate
GAMEPLAY	05	Bowling's easy, batting's hard, fielding's impossible
LIFESPAN	07	Plenty of teams and tournaments for the fans

Cricket 2005 looks absolutely mmarmarvelous, but the gameplay is a bit too unbalanced to provide a strong case for selection.

07



Play-test



X PARTY



SINGSTAR POP

No sign of SingStar Snap and SingStar Crackle

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY ■ DEVELOPER: SONY ■ PRICE: \$49.95/\$99.95 (MICS) ■ PLAYERS: 1-8 ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.singstargame.com ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: NO ■ SURROUND SOUND: NO

BACK STORY

SingStar needs no introduction. It burst on the scene 18 months ago and has been monstrously successful. The sequel SingStar Party took it up a notch by introducing the Pass The Mic mode and it paid off because the game is still sitting in the Top 10 sales chart. While others have tried to knock it off its perch, it's still the karaoke king and SingStar Pop looks to ensure that its reign will last even longer.

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
SingStar Party

WORSE THAN

Running down Shannon Noll in a big, black shiny car

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME

Solid pop songs. Something for everyone

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX

Better Aussie flavour

We all know what SingStar is, so let's just jump straight into it. Not much has changed since SingStar Party. The biggest inclusion to the series is the use of local talent, however we use the word talent loosely when bands like Savage Garden are included in the mix. The talent isn't exactly the cream of Australian music's crop but they're definitely pop. Artists range from the good, Missy Higgins and INXS, to the bad, Natasha Bedingfield and Bic Runga, to the ugly, The Spazzys and Delta Goodrem. Of course there are some great international acts thrown into the mix, including the Black Eyed Peas, The Dandy Warhols, Blink 182 and Outkast. So you should have no problem finding something that a) you know the words to, and b) will have fun singing along to.

All your favourite modes are back (Pass The Mic, Battle and Duet). You'll also be able to use the EyeToy once again to capture the memorable, and forgettable, moments from your performances. So if you've rocked the mic in the previous SingStar's then you'll feel right at home with Pop.

A surprising addition to the series though is the new rap meter. This only pops up in some songs, but wannabe Eminems can try their hand at rapping along to the beat in between verses to try and increase their score. Pop will measure your rhyming skills based on how well it flows with the beat. If you come off sounding phat like Dr Dre then your bar will increase and you'll earn bonus points. However if you rip it up like

Ja Rule then your bar will decrease and you can kiss your score goodbye. You really have to know the song inside out to pull off the raps and while it's fun when busting a good rhyme, most of the time it's not worth trying.

Team games have been made even more interesting thanks to the new Melody mode, that grabs lines from different songs and combines them into one. Think Linkin Park and Jay Z but both singing at the same time and you'll have an idea what it's like. Surprisingly it works really well, but it's very easy to get mixed up in each other's lyrics. It's a whole lot of fun and leads to some very entertaining results.

The new additions to the series are only minor though. The bottom line is SingStar Pop is about giving us new songs to sing along to when we want to belt out a tune. While the song selection suits the pop theme, it would be good to see some other SingStar games focus on different genres, since the last two have focussed heavily on teeny-bop pop songs. Regardless SingStar Pop is still great fun to play and provides the same amount of hours of entertainment as the previous ones, if not more.

The only gripe we have with it is that they could have chosen more talented Aussie artists. But no matter what there's always going to be songs on there that some people don't like so its not as big a problem as proposing to your teacher after drinking a bottle of tequila – Tristan is still paying for that one. So dust off your microphones, do your sound checks and sing the night away with SingStar Pop. You won't regret it. **Paul Frew**

THE OPS2 SINGSTAR WISH LIST

We're big music fans here at OPS2 hours. Tristan is a huge Powderfinger fan, Luke loves the hard rock, Phill digs his old school hip hop, Paul grooves the night away with his techno beats and Naz loves to kick back with some Village People and George Michael. So you can bet it's tough to decide what radio station gets played in the office but it's even tougher to choose a song in SingStar. Here's what the office came up with as a wish list for the next title.

Baby I've Got You On My Mind – Powderfinger
St. Anger – Metallica
Nuthin But A G Thang – Dr Dre
Stuck In The Middle – Stealers Wheel
Satisfaction – Benny Benassi
In The Navy – Village People
Jailhouse Rock – Elvis
Rollover DJ – Jet
Drop It Like It's Hot – Snoop Dogg
Wake Me Up Before You Go Go – Wham!
Total Eclipse of the Heart – Bonnie Tyler
Afternoon Delight – Ron Burgundy

OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	05	All the videos but nothing special
SOUND	05	Great tunes but needs more variety
GAMEPLAY	05	It's just singing, anyone can play
LIFESPAN	05	The fun lasts for hours and hours

Another solid SingStar title at a bargain price. Keep 'em coming.

09



★ BEAT 'EM UP

DYNASTY WARRIORS 5

Is bigger always better?

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ ■ DEVELOPER: OMEGA FORCE ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.koelgames.com ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: NO ■ SURROUND SOUND: YES ■ ONLINE: NO

★ BACK STORY

This is the 9th game in the Warriors series and Omega Force has been behind every single one of them. Seven of these have been part of the Dynasty series while the other two are part of the Samurai series. Omega Force was also behind the action title Winback, which originated on the N64.

We love a good fight. Whether it's in the NRL's State of Origin between NSW and Qld or a boozehound stepping on another guy's foot in a pub, a good fight is always great to watch. The Dynasty Warriors series has always been about great fights. Every game in the series has seen you become a one-man army dishing out punishment to armies of guys who probably got picked last for cricket in primary school. Unfortunately that's all the series has ever been about, meaning there's been about as much depth in the games as there is in Sydney's dams.

Dynasty Warriors 5 sticks with this tradition so unfortunately it's another case of very familiar territory. We'll give Omega Force credit though, it has at least taken a shot at making Dynasty Warriors 5 a little different from the previous games. One example is that you can now hack through Musou mode with 30 different warriors, as opposed to the measly four in DW4. Each one will even have their own individual story and missions too, so you've got a real reason to keep coming back. In the end though, you are still doing the same thing, despite who you're decapitating enemies with. It's always slay this army, then this one, rinse and repeat. It's just so repetitive. It's just so repetitive. It's just so repetitive.

Challenge mode is also different and a lot more interesting than previous Dynasty Warriors games. These are just quick

challenges that give you the same amount of action as in Musou mode, but in shorter bursts. You can try your hand at the Time Attack mode where you have to beat 100 enemies as quickly as possible, Rampage mode where you have to crush as many enemies as possible in a certain time limit, Sudden Death where you have to kill as many people as possible without getting hit and Bridge Melee where you have to knock people off the bridge before they knock you off it. The action in these modes is off the charts, and you only have to do a couple of battles in each mode, so it avoids being too repetitive. These modes are where the game shines.

Unfortunately the new Challenge mode is not enough to warrant the price tag if you've bought all the other Dynasty Warriors. If you're hoping for something revolutionary then you're better off looking for a good Sandra Bullock film – seriously, she's done nothing since Speed. Even though there is much more to the Musou mode it's still more of the same. Anyone buying a sequel wants some serious differences and improvements over its predecessor – and Dynasty Warriors 5 doesn't offer that.

If you've never played a Dynasty Warrior game before then this is a great introduction, but for the rest of you, we recommend sitting this one out and waiting for the next big thing. Although, considering the developer didn't change much for the last four games, you could be waiting a while. **Paul Frew**

BOOKWORM

Thank God Dynasty Warriors 5 comes with an encyclopaedia, otherwise we'd have no chance of passing our Dynasty Warriors exam. If we don't pass then we won't be one of the cool kids. See if you can answer these brain teasers.

- 1) Who was the former Prefect of Xi Liang?
- 2) Which southern campaign forced Liu Bei to flee giving control to Jing?
- 3) Who gave himself the legendary title of Han Zhong King?

Answers are in Dynasty Warriors 5 and at the bottom of the page. Reading in an action game, what will they think of next?



★ LAB TEST

BETTER THAN

Dynasty Warriors 4

WORSE THAN

Kessen III

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME

The Challenge mode is where the fun is at

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX

We need something new and groundbreaking. Give it to us!

★ OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	08	An improvement from last year
SOUND	05	On the repetitive side
GAMEPLAY	05	Same old, same old
LIFESPAN	05	Tonnes to do for die-hards

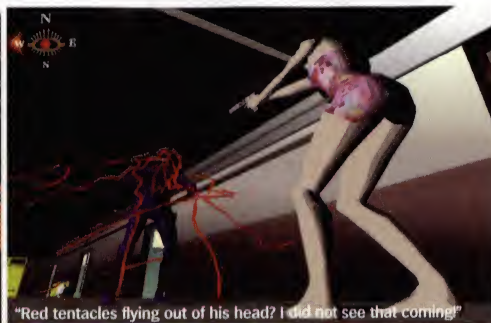
A handful of improvements but nothing that makes it an essential buy.

06

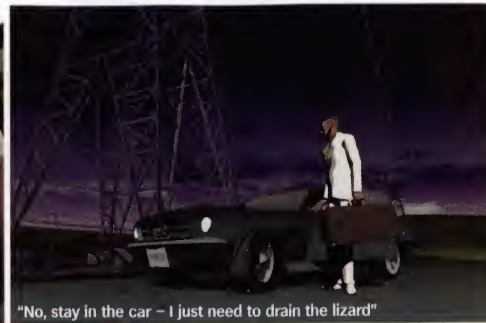
ANSWERS: 1) DONG ZHONG, 2) CAO CAO AND 3) LIU BEI



Yeah, holding your gun behind your neck is so in right now!



"Red tentacles flying out of his head? I did not see that coming!"



"No, stay in the car - I just need to drain the lizard"



ACTION-ADVENTURE

KILLER7

As cool as Pulp Fiction and roughly as interactive...

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ ■ DEVELOPER: CAPCOM ■ PRICE: \$89.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1 ■ OUT: JULY ■ WEB: www.killer7.com ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: NO ■ SURROUND SOUND: NO ■ ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

killer7 was produced by Shinji Mikami, who created the Resident Evil series, and Hiroyuki Kobayashi, the absolute genius that will revitalise the survival horror genre with Resident Evil 4. Prescription medication is uncredited.

Capcom's *killer7* is a truly baffling experience. It's kind of like switching your television to SBS in the middle of the night and attempting to pick up the storyline of an obscure Japanese horror film halfway through. Also? You haven't slept for two weeks straight, and you're heavily drunk. It's the source of more noggin-scratching than a hat made out of head lice, and if you're the type of gamer that prides themselves on never having to read the instruction manual - consider this a challenge.

From what we can ascertain, the plot basically revolves around an army of walking bombs spreading shock and terror around the world (a bit like the cast of *Grease - The Musical*). You play the role of a highly trained assassin with a split personality and must pursue and confront the malicious Kun Lan - your ex-best friend and mastermind behind the reckless global destruction.

The main character's name is Harman Smith, but throughout the adventure you'll take control of all seven of his split personalities that actually transform his appearance - each with their own weaponry and special abilities, and all with the surname 'Smith'. There's even a Kevin Smith, but unfortunately you can't make him fall on his own knives (we're still waiting for that apology for *Jersey Girl*, Kev).

You're not alone on your quest, and often you'll receive tips on what to do next from a mysterious gimp clad in red leather that dangles from the ceiling (which reminds us of our high school careers advisor - what do you think of

us now, Mr Kelly?). If that's not weird enough for you, you can also transform your personality at any time by finding a television and changing the channel.

killer7 is directed in a post-modern anime aesthetic, but beneath the glossy cel-shaded surface it actually plays like a dated, *Myst*-style adventure game. You travel along a completely linear path at all times - you can't so much as take a step either side - and you can only divert from the path when given visual prompts at specific junctions. For example, when you move to the end of a hallway, you might be given the option of entering an elevator, or turning a corner, rather than physically pushing your character in either of those directions.

The gameplay isn't entirely static though; *killer7* also features a fairly shallow combat element (see 'Point and click'). Each time you enter a room, you must scan it for invisible enemies by switching to the first-person view and pressing the **LB** button. Once an enemy is detected they become visible, allowing you to lock onto them and blast away until they erupt in a pornographic spray of cartoon blood.

And that's really about it; there's a fair bit of puzzle solving, a heck of a lot of twisted-clown laughter that's guaranteed to make you feel uncomfortable and an extremely low amount of character and environmental interactivity. If you're looking for an enjoyable, hands-on action adventure title, then keep walking - there's nothing to see here. On the other hand, if you're willing to sacrifice fun and interactivity for art, *killer7* could be worth a look. **Tristan Ogilvie**

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
NOT PLAYING GAMES AT ALL

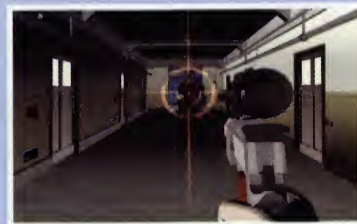
WORSE THAN
HAVING FUN

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME
If their aim was to confuse and frustrate, then *killer7* is a success

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX
It's pretty unique; we can't imagine we'll be seeing a *killer8*

POINT AND CLICK

The combat in *killer7* can be described as weak at best (by the way, who needs a reload cut-scene?). Enemies can only be targeted in the first-person view; which annoyingly roots you to the spot, leaving enemies to rapidly advance towards you like fleshy cardboard cut-outs at a firing range. Occasionally there'll be enemies that have specific weak points to target, but for the most part you can pretty much blaze away at any part of their body and get the same result. Then, after you have dispatched them, you can collect their blood in a brown paper bag (duh!).



OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	06	Classy anime, but not for everyone
SOUND	07	Creepy at times, annoying at others
GAMEPLAY	05	Plays like an Internet Flash game
LIFESPAN	06	Two difficulty levels, decent length

killer7 is undeniably stylish, but its cool originality has come at the expense of fun.

05



STRATEGY

WORMS 4: MAYHEM

Get worms without French-kissing your dog...

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI ■ DEVELOPER: TEAM 17 ■ PRICE: \$69.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-4 ■ OUT: AUGUST ■ WEB: www.wormsmayhem.com ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: NO ■ SURROUND SOUND: NO ■ ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Developer Team 17 has been pumping out Worms games for the last ten years on everything from the Apple Mac to the Atari Jaguar. They've previously wriggled their way onto PS2 in the form of Worms Blast, Worms 3D and Worms Forts: Under Siege.

The long-running Worms series is a lot like the smart kid at school. If you make the effort to get to know them, you'll find that they're actually quite funny and quite different to every other kid in the playground. Sadly, you'll also realise that they're just never going to be popular.

The design of Worms 4: Mayhem is largely unchanged from Worms 3D. You still guide teams of the slippery little invertebrates around randomised maps, taking turns to unleash deadly and often hilarious arsenals on your opponents. Classic weaponry such as the homing missiles, baseball bats and the infamous attack sheep return, and the environments are still entirely destructible; erupting in plumes of cel-shaded smoke after a lethal airstrike.

A new story mode sees you complete a series of objectives such as reducing a half-constructed enemy base to rubble or sabotaging your adversary's weapon supply lines. It's a welcome addition, particularly if you only plan on playing the game on your own. But really, buying this game for anything other than the classic multiplayer portion would be like biting an apple and finding half a worm in it; it will leave you full of regret (and possibly half-chewed worm guts).

Customisation is probably the biggest new feature in Worms 4. Character creation lets you adjust everything from your worm's appearance to how they talk. Weapons customisation lets you decide the physical construction of your weapon from a number of preset parts, and whether it will be launched, thrown or a type of air strike. Finally, customisable game types

are based on existing modes and let you alter everything from the number of rounds to the presence of ammo crates and teleport pads. So if you've always wanted to have a French-speaking worm that throws explosive vomit buckets within a booby-trapped arena of your own design, then look no further (you can also stop hassling the poor guy at the pet shop).

Once you've created a team of squirmly soldiers you can take them into battle in one of five multiplayer modes, with support for up to four players (no Multitap is required as it's all turn-based). Deathmatch is just classic last man standing fare, Homelands gives each team a fort to defend, Destruction is a race to completely obliterate an enemy's base, Statue Defend makes you destroy enemy statues while defending your own and Survivor forces you to duel it out with only one-worm teams.

The multiplayer modes are really the main attraction, and with four players passing the controller around there's always plenty of laughs (although why you don't at least get the option of using separate controllers is still an absolute mystery to us). Competitive streaks also tend to come out when taking turns in the TimeSplitters-style challenge mode, which sees you racing against the clock to snipe cardboard shooting targets or flying around a map with a jetpack collecting crates.

While there's definitely more to do here than in any other Worms game before, there really isn't enough freshness in this can of worms to make it the appetising bait needed to catch new fans. **Tristan Ogilvie**

FUN FACT!

Worms originated as a fan project, created with a cut-down version of Blitz BASIC programming language given away with an issue of Amiga Format magazine in the UK.

WORMHOLE

The wacky stars of the long running game franchise aren't the only famous Worms.

Computer Worm

A worm is similar to a computer virus, but unlike a virus it doesn't need to be part of another program to propagate itself. It can't be removed with over-the-counter cream from the chemist either.

Dennis Rodman

The controversial basketball player was nicknamed 'The Worm', presumably because he was slippery on the court (either that, or because he has a small rod, man).

Earthworm Jim

This classic videogame character from the 16-Bit era was responsible for bringing back the term 'Whoa, Nelly!' (as if it ever really went away).

The Worm

The signature finishing move from professional wrestler Scotty 2 Hotty involved him wriggling around the ring like a worm while his opponent played dead on the canvas before finishing up with a damaging elbow drop.

OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	08	Cute and cartoony, perfectly suited
SOUND	08	Funny accents and one-liners
GAMEPLAY	06	About as evolved as an Earthworm
LIFESPAN	07	Plenty to do if you get hooked

Same old Worms, with barely enough new features to please longtime fans.

06

LAB TEST

BETTER THAN
WORMS FORTS: UNDER SIEGE

WORSE THAN
UNDER SIEGE (THE STEVEN SEAGAL MOVIE)

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME
Weapon customisation is cool, extended lifespan for singleplayers

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX
They can't do much with it - why not create an entirely new game?

Play-test

WEIRDEST INTRO MOVIE EVER

CG mixed with real footage, a little girl playing in the garden and a crazy dude holding up empty picture frames in the desert? What the hell is going on here?



We are not enthused...



A car even we could afford



Most. Realistic physics. Evaaaaa...r...



RACING

ENTHUSIA – PROFESSIONAL RACING

Haven't we played this game before?

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI ■ DEVELOPER: KONAMI ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ PLAYERS: 1-2 ■ OUT: NOW ■ WEB: www.konami.com/gs/enthusia/ ■ 60HZ MODE: NO ■ WIDESCREEN: NO ■ SURROUND SOUND: NO ■ ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Konami may be responsible for the unparalleled Pro Evolution Soccer series, the pant-soiling Silent Hill franchise and modern classics like Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater, but that doesn't mean it's immune from making the odd dud or two. Cy Girls anyone? Enthusia seems destined to rest somewhere between these two extremes, like Shannon Noll sitting between Marilyn Manson and Britney Spears' mother.

What can we say about *Enthusia – Professional Racing*? The whole package practically screams Gran Turismo 4. We really wished it was good, but you can wish in one hand and crap in the other and see which one gets filled first.

It's not that *Enthusia* is a terrible game, it's just that it's hard to get enthusiastic about it with the sweet aftertaste of GT4's sugary, simulation goodness still fresh on our taste buds. Everything *Enthusia* does, GT4 does better. Sure, *Enthusia* has a few unique gimmicks – but gimmicks don't make great games.

The overly hyped VGS, or 'Visual G System' system is a monumental waste of time. A simple diagram displays the grip of each of your four tyres and a yellow circle in between represents your inertia. The further that yellow circle moves across the diagram, the more likely it is you'll plough off the road, and each tyre illustration depicts how much traction the tyre has. The biggest problem with the VGS system is that it's intensely annoying to have it right in the centre of the freakin' screen. The second problem is that it's completely useless. Let's say you notice your yellow ball is flipping around inside your display like an unrestrained toddler in a car accident – so what? Just keep the car on the road. G forces are also illustrated by a series of expanding arrows on either side of the diagram and a grey border around your screen shows acceleration, braking and lateral forces. These are just as annoying. The game has realistic physics – yeah, we get it – you don't have to prove it with a diagram. Thankfully, when

switched off, the game is noticeably better for it. Although, we can't say the same about the crappy and inconsistent motion blur effect.

The visuals certainly aren't second rate though, and *Enthusia* is certainly ahead of the curve when it comes to gleaming chrome and polished bonnets. The advanced driving physics feel just like GT4, so anyone comfortable behind the wheel of Polyphony's bad boy should be able to easily slip into *Enthusia's* driving seat. Analogue control is less precise than GT4 but for the most part it's a familiar sensation.

There are around 200 licensed autos in *Enthusia's* stable and while this doesn't approach the size of GT4, it does put it head and shoulders above most of the pack. Most of the usual suspects appear, but *Enthusia* does boast a few mechanical marvels you'll rarely find elsewhere, like a Pontiac 1973 Firebird Trans Am and a 1964 Aston Martin DB5. 50 tracks on offer are in a variety of locations like London and Paris, however only two are real circuits: Tsukuba and Nurburgring. *Enthusia's* career mode is unique but it contains a number of bizarre inclusions that seem to suck fun directly from the game. In *Enthusia* Life mode, the points you earn are calculated by your odds of winning. Victory in an underpowered car is rewarded, but this system inadvertently convinces you to avoid using the best car for the job. Prepare to let your super cars gather dust.

If it had come out six months ago it would've been better received, but stick with GT4 for all your driving simulator needs. Why buy milk when you already own the cow? **— Luke Reilly**

CAN'T TOUCH THIS

Enthusia Life mode includes Enthu points that are deducted for bad driving. This includes hitting walls, leaving the track, or nudging other cars. We can deal with avoiding walls and staying on course but having points deducted for car contact is crazy. The demerits for hitting other cars happen regardless of who's at fault in the collision. If an opponent car runs up your arse, you'll lose points. In tight courses with lots of turns, getting through without losing Enthu points means getting in front early or driving your ride like it's made of paper mache. Strategic moves like protecting your line are now a liability, so most of the fun from close races has been sapped. Not cool.



LAB TEST

BETTER THAN

SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE

WORSE THAN

GRAN TURISMO 4

WHAT THEY NAILED THIS TIME

Slack graphics, respectable garage

WHAT THEY NEED TO FIX

Could it be any more similar to GT4?

OFFICIAL VERDICT

GRAPHICS	09	Crisp, not quite on par with GT4
SOUND	05	Nothing, amazing – tragic music
GAMEPLAY	04	Gimmicks and re-hashed ideas
LIFESPAN	05	Plenty to do but doesn't engage

It's hard to recommend *Enthusia* to anyone, whether they own GT4 or not – uninspiring.

05

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LIVING FAST?



THEN TRY AUSTRALIA'S LEADING
F1 MAGAZINE OUT EVERY MONTH





INFO

PSP price plummets

It hasn't even been released in Australia yet and already the price of the PlayStation Portable has tumbled from the originally announced \$429.95 RRP to the official new price of \$399.95 RRP! Now it's even harder to refuse! It's still the same value-packed er, Value Pack consisting of remote-equipped headphones, a pouch and wrist strap, AC adaptor and battery pack, 32MB memory stick, UMD demo disc, cleaning cloth and of course a glossy PSP unit. Sadly the release date hasn't been brought forward – you still have to wait until September 1st to pick one up. But that just gives you time to think of what to do with that extra 30 bucks!



Capcom classics confirmed

Capcom is re-releasing two of its more memorable titles from yesteryear on PSP. *Mega Man Legends* and *Breath of Fire III*, which both appeared on the PSone in 1998, are set for release in Japan before the end of August. It's not known whether they are straight ports of the originals or completely revamped versions, and we're not even certain that they'll see a release in Australia. But remember, PSP games aren't region-locked so you'll still be able to grab both games the next time you're in downtown Tokyo (and could you pick us up a Hello Kitty backpack... er, for our niece?).



UMD, @\$% yeah!

Major movie studios continue to jump on the UMD bandwagon, with Paramount, MGM, Disney and Universal Studios just a handful of film publishers with UMDs on their US release schedules. *Team America*, *The Rock*, *Sin City*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Van Helsing* and *The Fast and the Furious* are just a few of the movies confirmed for the portable format, with popular television series' such as *South Park* and *Stargate: Atlantis* also on the way. None of these releases have been confirmed for Australia as yet, but the launch line-up was being finalised at the time of writing and we should have all the details next month!



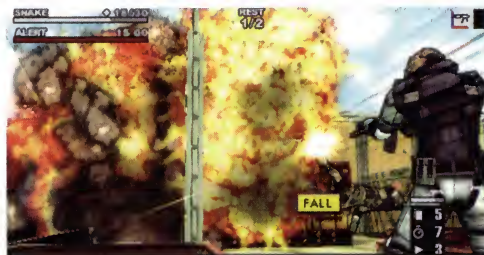
PSP NEWS

Everything that's happening in the world of PSP

Snake's slithery sequel

More Ac!d on the cards

We've barely even managed some hands-on time with the original game and now Konami has revealed that development on *Metal Gear Ac!d 2* is already under way.



The sequel introduces a cel-shaded graphical style, but retains the tactical stealth card-based gameplay that has made the original a hit with both Japanese and North American gamers on the go. Apparently the new game is going to be around double the length of *Metal Gear Ac!d*, and will also feature showdowns with several classic characters from the *Metal Gear* universe, possibly including Revolver Ocelot and Big Boss.



The game's interface has also been refined as players can now build strategies more intuitively, choose more card types than the previous instalment and engage in more highly strategic, tactical battles. No



release date has been announced for *Metal Gear Ac!d 2*, so there should still be plenty of time for you to check out Snake's first pocket-sized adventure this September.

My Generation

Strategy RPG invades PSP



Tokyo-based developer Idea Factory is taking its popular *Generation of Chaos* outside of Japan for the first time with an all-new PSP version.

Generation of Chaos PSP lets you take charge of a miniature kingdom, which you then must strengthen and build up in order to expand your boundaries out across the land of Duke. Expect real-time battles with up to 60 characters at once on-screen, and the ability



to customise troops and form alliances with rival kingdoms (that is, when you're not slaughtering them on the battlefield). The gameplay style is perfectly suited to quick bursts on the train or on a lunch break so we're definitely keen to command a pocket-sized army.

GOOAAAAALLLLL!!!

Balls in the palm of your hand

Given that it's the most popular sport in the world, it's not a huge surprise to see the number of soccer titles PSP bound.

World Tour Soccer: Challenge Edition (pictured) is being developed by the same Sony studio responsible for the upcoming car combat title, *Fired Up*, and boasts an incredible 250 teams ranging from international squads to classic clubs and even super teams. All the real players are in there too, and the gameplay has been simplified for the handheld format to allow for instant footy thrills.



Also on the footy front, *FIFA Soccer* was released for PSP in the US last year and presumably we'll get the same game down under, if not an updated version.

But perhaps the most exciting news for hardcore ball-kickers is that *Pro Evolution Soccer 5* has been confirmed by Konami, so you'll be able to take what is arguably the greatest videogame representation of the sport ever made with you wherever you go (as long as you don't go to the moon; there aren't any power outlets there to recharge the battery).





X SPORTS

VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR

Set to cause a handheld racquet!

Tennis games are pretty much as old as the videogame medium itself, and although Pong may have arrived first there's never been a finer representation of the sport than the *Virtua Tennis* series. Revamped and resized for the PSP, it could possibly become the first essential sports title for Sony's shiny new pocket warmer.

Presentation in the upcoming *World Tour* edition is already looking excellent, and graphically it looks as good as, if not



better than, the PS2 version. The stadium detail is extremely crisp on the PSP screen, and the character models retain the high level of quality.

The simple control layout and fast, twitch-based gameplay have been ported seamlessly onto the PSP, which also retains the character customisation and wacky attribute-building minigames from the PS2 classic. Fourteen yet-to-be-named male and female tennis pros are set to feature, as well as the usual courts in various locations around the globe.

Virtua Tennis: World Tour is certainly shaping up to provide multiplayer heaven for PSP owners, with up to sixteen players battling it out wirelessly in both singles and doubles tournaments, with up to four players at once in each match – each with their own screen! Now you can't blame being on the top of the screen for your poor form. Blaming your "lack of thumbs" is still permitted, though (our dog is a sore loser – but we still have to live with him). **TO**



DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-6

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: SEGA



X PUZZLE

LEMMINGS

The tiny buggers get tinier

Those mindless little rodents have appeared on pretty much every console and home computing platform ever produced, so it may not come as a complete surprise, but it's still welcome news, to hear that they're blindly following their way onto PSP.

If you're unfamiliar with the premise, the game basically allows you to guide the little fellas towards the goal in each stage, utilising various strengths such as climbing and digging abilities along the way and often sacrificing their insignificant lives with spontaneous combustion.

The new version will thankfully remain 2D, and will feature all the levels from the original classic along with brand new



ones designed exclusively for the PSP. One feature that we're particularly excited about is the built-in level creator – which allows you to design your own deathtraps and trade them with friends via Wi-Fi.

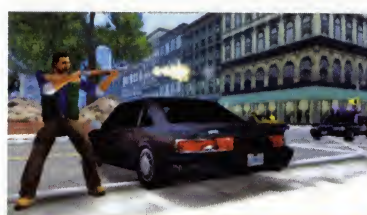
The gameplay should be ideal for the handheld platform, as it's tailor made for both three-minute thrills and extended marathon sessions (a claim that we also made about ourselves in our personals ad – ladies take note). **TO**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: TEAM 17



X ACTION

GTA: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

Return to where it all began

In case you missed the sealed section in last month's issue (you better have been in a coma), Rockstar granted OPS2 a world exclusive first look at the game most likely to set and smash PSP software sales records, *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*.

As the name suggests, *Liberty City Stories* sees you return to the city featured in *GTAIII*. The new game takes place three years prior to the events in *GTAIII*, and lets the player take control of Toni Cipriani – a mid-level mafia goon employed by the Leone family.

Numerous features from the PS2 *GTA* games have been confirmed for *Liberty City Stories*, including motorcycles, planes,



a variety of weapons, insane jumps and a targeting system that falls somewhere between that of *Vice City* and the one in *San Andreas*. The absolute icing on the cake (and we're talking about the kind of cake that a stripper jumps out of, only better) would be multiplayer support via Wi-Fi, however as far as we know the game will be single-player only. Then again, did you honestly see the two player mode in *GTA: San Andreas* coming? **TO**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR

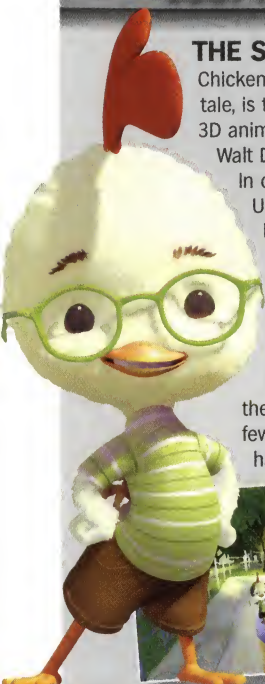
JUST FOR KIDS

THE SKY IS FALLING

Chicken Little, the classic children's tale, is to provide the basis for the first 3D animated movie created by The Walt Disney Company and is due in cinemas at Christmas 2005.

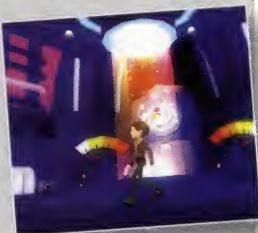
Unsurprisingly, there's also a PS2 game in the works that lets you take control of the naïve little piece of poultry in an adventure involving rocket jet-packs, slingshots, hoverboards and alien invasions (?). Hmm, seems like the new movie must be taking a few liberties with the story – we haven't even heard a mention of

Henny Penny, Goosey Poosey or Foxy Woxy (if they leave out Cocky Locky we're walking out of the cinema).



THE GOLDEN TICKET

You've probably already seen the trailers for the film remake starring the wonderfully weird Johnny Depp, and now Take Two is allowing gamers to get up close and personal with the Oompa Lompas themselves in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* – the game. As Charlie Bucket you'll get to explore the entire factory, including rooms from the book that don't appear in the film, and repair huge confectionary machines by solving puzzles and overcoming the other bratty children. Eating different types of candy will also give you special abilities – just like real life! That's totally why we just ate that whole bag of fun-sized Mars bars. Boy, we feel dizzy.

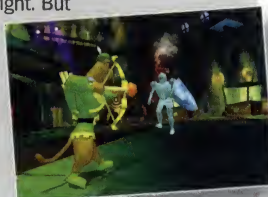


SCOOBY SNACKS

Ruh-roh! Scooby Doo and the gang are returning to PS2 complete with a brand new authentic cel-shaded graphics engine. Fred's cousin, Jed, has gone missing – leaving his robotic monsters to go haywire and attack everyone in sight. But

it's no problem when Scooby is on the case, especially when he's endowed with brand new powers thanks to his Kung Fu and Robin Hood costumes.

Locations in the game include the Harum Scare'm Museum and the Rockin' Roller Coaster, and the voice work will be provided by the team from the cartoon as well as none other than Adam West, aka Batman from the 1960s TV show! BANG! POW! ZOINKS?



ACTION-ADVENTURE

THE INCREDIBLES: RISE OF THE UNDERMINER

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-2

RELEASE DATE: SPRING

The Simpsons of Superheroes are set to return...

The *Incredibles* was a great-looking, okay-playing action adventure that did a solid job of capturing the humour and excitement of the blockbuster movie. The sequel, *The Incredibles: Rise of the Underminer*, picks up the story from where the previous game (and film) left off and is shaping up to improve the gameplay in quite a number of ways.

Firstly, the inclusion of a two player cooperative mode should increase the fun factor considerably – it was certainly a big part of the reason that *LEGO Star Wars* was such a hit in the OPS2 Towers. Being able to enjoy the adventure with a buddy is a feature that really isn't used enough, and it certainly will be sweet to see Frozone and Mr Incredible dishing out the justice, side by side.

And it's no big deal if you're gaming on your lonesome,

as you'll still have a computer-controlled partner throughout the quest that you can give orders to with the D-Pad; directly influencing whether they stay close, move ahead, attack or just chill out.

The other cool new feature is the character customisation. Not only are the characters already far more fleshed out from the get-go than they were in the previous game, but you can also upgrade and customise them to your own tastes. For example, Frozone can go from doing basic ice punches and freeze-ray projectiles to the aerial ice surfing moves that were used to good effect in the climax of the film.

What Mr Incredible lacks in special powers he makes up for with brutal punches, throws and a deadly beergut-propelled belt buckle attack (no, not really – but it would be cool, right?). **TO**



PLATFORMER

MADAGASCAR

Escape from NY, animal-style

Though the story focuses on Marty's escape from the New York Zoo and subsequent journey to Madagascar, you'll also get to take control of his friends; Alex the lion, Melman the giraffe, Gloria the hippo and a host of others.

The gameplay is reasonably diverse, and though for the most part you'll be hopping platforms and searching for keys to unlock doors, the repetition is broken up a bit by frantic chase sequences, fishing mini-games and even homage's to classic games like *Frogger*. **TO**

DETAILS

PLAYERS: 1-4

AVAILABLE: NOW

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Diverse gameplay, vibrant graphics and a humorous script make *Madagascar* a wild ride



CHARACTER PROFILE



Name: Marty

Voice: Chris Rock

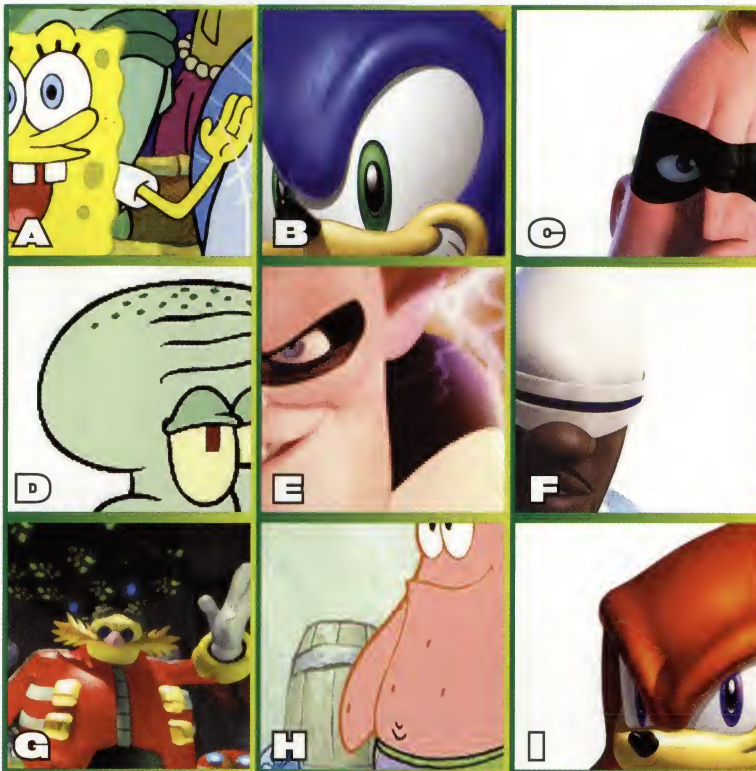
BACKSTORY: After spending the first ten years of his life in the Zoo, Marty can't help but dream of what lies in the outside world. Little does he know that he's about to embark on an adventure beyond his wildest dreams!

QUOTE: "The penguins are doin' it, why can't I?"

DID YOU KNOW: The stripes on a zebra acts as both a camouflage mechanism, and also a way for them to distinguish each other due to the slight variations in the stripes. Now you'll never mistake one zebra for another again (provided you can actually see them in the first place).

PICK THE FACE

We've taken some really bad photos of a number of videogame characters (they weren't willing to pose so we had to take the pictures secretly through their bathroom windows with our camera phone). Trouble is, now we can't work out who they are! That's why we need your help – we want you to figure out the names of the characters in the following photos. Just write them down next to the letters corresponding to their pictures and send them in! The first five correct entries we receive will win an awesome prize pack from THQ, consisting of a copy of *The Incredibles*, *Sonic Heroes* and *The SpongeBob Squarepants Movie* game. That's three awesome games for the price of a postage stamp, or an email (which is nothing). Get out the magnifying glass!



HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au with "Pick the Face - August" in the subject line or post your entries via snail mail to OPS2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly

marked and must include the name of the competition, your name, age, email address, contact number and your full address – please don't forget your

postcode! All competitions close 24 August 2005. This competition is also open to NZ residents. What are you waiting for?

TOY OF THE MONTH



TOY OF THE MONTH

Chicks love the car – and you will too! This Batmobile is a detailed replica of the one that started them all. Featured in the brilliant new film, *Batman Begins*, this prototype vehicle is a high-tech ride that strikes fear into the criminals of the city with its combination of speed and power. It's packed with electronics that help recreate

key scenes from the movie, such as the rocket engine in the rear and the lasers in the front that both light up and make cool sounds. You can also transform the Batmobile into an attack mode with twin projectiles that fire out at the touch of a button. Sounds good? The Batmobile is made by Mattel and is available now for \$49.95.

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CONSTANTINE

Director: Francis Lawrence **Writer:** Jamie Delano, Garth Ennis **Starring:** Keanu Reeves, Rachel Weisz, Shila LaBeouf, Djimon Hounsou, Max Baker **Rating:** M



FILM: Ah comic books, where would Hollywood be without them? For those unfamiliar with the comic *Hellblazer*, John Constantine, Keanu Reeves, is a kind of supernatural detective. Unfortunately, John is destined for hell, so now he goes through life eliminating

demons on Earth to try and buy his way back into heaven.

In his latest case, Constantine is investigating the alleged suicide of his hottie cop sidekick's twin sister. This leads to confrontations with all kinds of hell-spawned critters. There's even one that resembles The Pain from MGS3 because of the tricks he can pull off with horns.

The movie's a ride that takes you to hell and back. Literally.

What *Constantine* lacks in snappy dialogue it makes up for in action. Every time a gun is pulled, demons appear or Constantine travels to hell your heart-rate will race higher than Keanu's paycheck. And even though Keanu throws in some average one-liners and sounds a little too much like Neo, you'll be entertained by what you see. Especially anytime Rachel

Weisz is dripping wet. Oh baby! **7/10**

EXTRAS: What doesn't it have? Audio commentary from the film makers, deleted scenes, an alternate ending, featurettes on creating *Constantine*, producing demons

and loads more. Very in-depth. **10/10**

VERDICT: It's not a bad movie but it's no classic piece of film work either. Don't expect too much and you'll enjoy the ride. **PF**



LITTLE HELL RAISER

Hellblazer was created by legendary comics creator Alan Moore in 1985. The original John Constantine was from Liverpool, England but the producers changed his origin for the film so the man formerly known as Neo could play the part. It was probably for the best. The film would have been much more scarier if Keanu was trying to put on a British accent.



"I didn't mean to say it, Trinity means nothing to me anymore"

BUBBA HO-TEP

Writer: Joe R. Lansdale (short story) Don Coscarelli (screenplay) **Starring:** Bruce Campbell, Ossie Davis, Bob Ivy, Ella Joyce **Rating:** M15+



FILM: What if Elvis never died? What if he switched lives with an impersonator when the going got tough – but the impersonator croaked and the real Elvis lost all proof of the switch in a freak BBQ

accident? According to this film, the hunka hunka burnin' love would've ended up in a Texas nursing home taking care of business with an ancient Egyptian mummy. He also gets help from a fellow who thinks he's JFK. It sounds absurd and we're sure there'll be a few suspicious minds, but *Bubba Ho-Tep* needs to be seen to be understood. It's an instant, one-of-a-kind cult classic. **9/10**

EXTRAS: The commentary from Campbell and Coscarelli is great but the parody commentary from the King himself is worth the asking price alone. There's also an exclusive interview with Campbell. **10/10**

VERDICT: Hilarious, bizarre, spooky and even a little moving, it's easily Bruce Campbell's best-ever performance. Hail to the King, baby. **LR**



Bubba Ho-Tep isn't an Elvis fan – he's more of a Beatles guy...

ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

Director: Jean-François Richet **Writer:** John Carpenter, James DeMonaco **Starring:** Ethan Hawke, Laurence Fishburne, Gabriel Byrne, Brian Dennehy **Rating:** MA15+



FILM: A police sergeant has to force cops and criminals to work together to stop corrupt cops from killing a gangland mobster. With an all-star cast, minus Ja Rule, the acting makes the story seem more interesting than it really is. **7/10**

EXTRAS: Four behind-the-scenes featurettes

discussing topics like weapons handling and the history of the precinct, deleted scenes and a behind-the-scenes documentary. While they're interesting to watch, you only need to see them once. **6/10**

VERDICT: An average film worth watching more for the performances than the actual story. **PF**

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

Director: Peter Berg **Writer:** Buzz Blissinger **Starring:** Billy Bob Thornton, Derek Luke, Jay Hernandez, Lucas Black **Rating:** PG



FILM: A cracking drama with some great on-field sequences, *Friday Night Lights* is a marked departure from director Peter Berg's previous film, *Welcome to the Jungle*. Billy Bob Thornton squeezes out one of his best performances to date as coach Gary

Gaines and Berg does a commendable job of painting a disturbingly sad portrait of parents living through their kids. Surprisingly dramatic and thought-provoking, *Friday Night Lights* is one of the better sports movies of this, or any other, year – despite its 'God Bless America' sentiments. If you enjoyed films like *Remember the Titans* and *Varsity Blues*, *Friday Night Lights* is a sure bet – only fans of the latter ought to be aware you won't catch Ali Larter in a whipped cream bikini this time. **8/10**

EXTRAS: *Friday Night Lights* isn't exactly brimming with special features. A director and writer commentary will interest some, but everything other than the 22 minute featurette on the real story of the 1988 Permian Panthers is fairly expendable. **5/10**

VERDICT: A great example of just how well an old-fashioned sports flick can work, regardless of how many others you've seen before. A soft rating means it's fairly family friendly, too. **LR**



Looks like a dream date for Paul

CANON IXUS 700

Manufacturer: Canon Available: Now Price: \$849

Canon is the king of making a basic rectangle look sexy. So we were surprised that the design of the new flagship IXUS 700 has been given some curves to make it looker even hotter. Technically speaking, the big news is the seven-megapixel sensor and super-fast operation – but while this isn't the first compact snapper to offer that, it's definitely the most stylish.

A good-quality 3x zoom lens is backed up by a crystal-clear two-inch LCD for framing and reviewing. The 700 utilises the same processing system as on Canon's pro cameras, so super-fast start-up and image writing are the order of the day. Other kick ass features include the My Colours option, which enables you to fool around with the colour on your shot, but helpfully saves an undoctored copy. There's also a choice of movie modes, including a 60 frames per second option, and everything is easily accessible via the impressive control layout on the back panel. The best news is that image quality is first rate, bursting with natural colour and detail. Resolution isn't the only factor in producing good pictures, but coupled with everything else, the IXUS 700 is a worthwhile purchase for capturing all of those magical moments or just proving to a friend you really did sleep with Paris Hilton. **SM 10/10**



SHARP XV-Z2000

Manufacturer: Sharp Available: Now Price: \$6,999

If you're looking for a home cinema projector, you'd be crazier than Anna Nicole Smith on drugs not to seriously consider one of the new generation models that support HDTV signals. This beast from Sharp is special because it uses the Hi Def-compatible HD2+ DLP chip. Until recently you'd have to sell an organ to raise the cash for a HD2+ projector, yet the Z2000 has a much more sensible price tag.

Setting it up is as easy as putting on pants because it's got motorised controls for the zoom and focus settings that are operated from the remote control. Once you connect a video signal, you're in for a treat in terms of picture quality. The images it throws are very bright, yet have excellent contrast, and the colour reproduction is vivid and realistic. However, there are downsides. The projector is quite noisy, and although the dreaded DLP rainbow effect is barely noticeable thanks to the faster colour wheel and new HD2+ chip, it still rears its ugly head occasionally. Overall, though, if you're willing to put up with the noise of the fan, you'll find the Z2000 an excellent home cinema projector that produces stunning results when fed with a High Definition picture source. With this baby you'll be completely setup for the PS3 next year! **NM 8/10**



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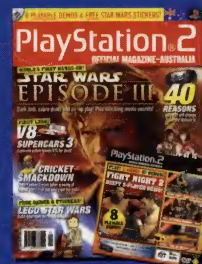
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Re-boot

PART ONE

LEGO Star Wars



This month we bring you part one of our definitive playguide for *LEGO Star Wars*. While it's easy finishing the game, it's not so easy to unlock the bonus level. Lucky you've got us here to give you a step-by-step guide on how to do it. You probably didn't even know there was a bonus level did you? Who said cheating didn't have any benefits?

JAMES ELLIS
Tips Editor

Best *Star Wars* game ever? Not quite, but it's darn close. The game might be a piece of cake to finish but did you collect every single stud and every single LEGO canister to unlock the bonus level, Episode IV: A New Hope, where you can play as the one and only Darth Vader? That's what we thought. Check out our *LEGO Star Wars* guide for all these secrets and more. Take note that the sections in *italics* can only be completed in Freeplay mode.

Use the Force on all the objects in Dexter's Diner before beginning Episode I.

EPISODE I: THE PHANTOM MENACE

CHAPTER 1: NEGOTIATIONS

Run across the table for the studs then use the Force on every chair to get some more. Go to the door and smash it open. Collect the blue stud on the right and use your lightsaber to destroy the equipment on the left of the door. Waste the droids then move the broken door parts. Take your first right in the hall and use the Force on the machinery for some items. Double jump when the platform reaches the top for another blue bolt.

Come back with Jar Jar to collect the blue stud on the walkway on the other side of the gear you fixed with the Force.

Go back and kill the droids. Open all the secret compartments for items then hit all six blue switches to get the LEGO canister. Head down the hall and kill the droids. Open some more secret compartments and hit the purple switches for another canister. Smash everything then switch to TC-14 and go back to the start of the hall to unlock any locked doors. Collect the studs then put the gears into the lifter. Use the Force when on the crate to access the blue studs floating overhead. Step on the grey floor switch and kill the

droids. Collect the canister and have TC-14 open the door at the end of the hallway.

Come back with Anakin (boy), Jar Jar and Obi Wan. Jump through the chute and step on the switch. Collect the studs on the upper ledge then switch to Obi-Wan to stack the boxes. Then have Jar Jar jump to the top and to the ledge to grab the canister.

Come back again but this time with R2, Obi-Wan and Jar Jar. Use R2 to open the locked door in the hallway then use Obi Wan to smash the equipment inside. Fix the vehicle and grab some studs under the showers along the wall. Kill the droids then stand on the cart. Once it's in the air, jump to grab the canister. Move the gears on the ground and the tools nearby for studs. Jump on the ledge to the tool containers left and rip the grate off from the vent above. Double jump with Jar Jar into the vent and activate the switch to disable the forcefield. Jump on the sides of the vehicle then double jump in the air to grab the next canister.

Go to where TC-14 is and open the next door. Open the compartments then continue on. Smash the equipment in the corner of the next room and collect the studs. Open the grate and form a ledge on the opposite wall. Kill the droids then jump on the ledge to grab the canister. Go through the dark grate and kill some more droids. Collect the two blue studs on the lower walkway from where you came in. Stack the three crates in the middle starting with the largest first one then jump on top and double jump to the ledge. Collect the studs and double jump straight up to get another LEGO canister. Move the

equipment in the corner to the other ledge and get some more studs.

Use R2 to open the door then step on the grey circle to have the platform rise. When the circular door opens, step on the switch to get out. Repeat the process again on the next set of switches to unveil a canister behind a hidden wall.

Attack the shield then smash the door once it's down. Stack some more boxes from largest to smallest. Activate the switch on the floor and the wall. Jump onto the stacked boxes and onto the moving ledge to collect the canister. Head towards the conveyer belt and collect the studs above it. Use the Force on the vehicle and the switch inside for studs. Use it again to form a ledge on the wall nearby.

Use Jar Jar to jump on the ledge next to the wall to grab the blue token here.

When you reach the ramp blocked by the shield, create ledges so you can jump over it. Kill the droids and step on one of the red switches. Collect the studs and jump on the brown vehicle to get a blue token. Collect the tokens and use TC-14 to activate the switch next to the brown vehicle.

CHAPTER 2: INVASION OF NABOO

Rip out the flowers throughout the level to collect the studs. Head forward when you're ready.

After a few meters head right with Panaka and Obi-Wan. Stack the pieces together and use Panaka to shoot the target for a canister.

Take out any droids you come across. Put the tree back together then smash it for a canister. Slice up a tonne of droids and destroy the transport vehicle with the Force. Jump to the left of the parts for a canister. Destroy the LEGO piece for another canister hidden in a hole. Grab Jar Jar and remove some flowers near the left of the stairs. Move the LEGO and have Jar Jar jump and collect the canister. Head up the stairs and go through the passage at the end. When you get to the painting, use the Force to turn it into LEGO so you can build a walkway. Get the studs behind the painting and slice up some droids. Use Jar Jar to jump to the next ledge then use Obi-Wan to turn on the switch and lower the platform above. Collect the studs and the blue stud on the platform with Jar Jar. Jump down and pull the pieces out of the wall. Collect any studs then jump to the next platform with Jar





Re-boot



Jar Jar. Cut up some droids then move the stone wall to find a canister. Cross the gap and kill more droids. Move the grey pieces to create a ledge so you can get the next canister. Then continue and kill some more droids.

Use Anakin (boy) to travel through the chute here and grab another canister.

After the pond battle, build a platform and have Jar Jar grab the blue stud. Use the Force to blow up the stuck vehicle and get Jar Jar to grab another blue stud on the statue head. Get him to also grab the studs on the pillar above here. After the next battle move the LEGO pieces to get another canister. Continue forward collecting all the studs. Go through the cave and stack the LEGO doing the legs first, torso second and head last. Kill any interfering droids and collect the canister. Use the Force on everything in the area for studs then head for water.

CHAPTER 3 - ESCAPE FROM NABOO

Have a Jedi grab the three LEGO boxes and stack them. Then get Jar Jar to jump on top of the stacked pile and into the air to grab the canister.

Stand in the red circle and grapple to the walkway. Shoot the droids and the guardrails for studs. Swing to the next ledge and collect some more studs. Shoot the plants and glass windows for more items. Drop down to the balcony and repeat everything you just did for more items. Grapple to the next area and kill more droids and more pot plants.

Move two sets of LEGO pieces to build a floating platform. Get Jar Jar to jump to the top and grab the canister.

Run towards the screen to grab the next canister and destroy the plants. Continue along destroying the environment and droids. Head left and drop down below. Grab the studs and shoot everything destructible.

To reach the ledge use R2 to fly across. Kill the droids then have Panaka grapple you to the canister.

Continue clearing areas of droids then grapple to the closed gate. Shoot the target to open it then collect all the studs and



Jump into the battle. Once it's clear go left to grab a canister and studs. Then follow the stairs and use your grappling hook to reach the next area. Go left to collect the blue stud then go down the stairs.

Go through the small chute with Anakin (boy) and up the stairs to find studs and a canister.

Use your grappling hook on the next balcony then drop to the main walkway for some studs. Kill more droids and pick up the studs. Smash the containers at the end of the walkway then use Panaka and Amidala to shoot the targets. Ride the lift and shoot four more targets to continue.

Collect the studs with Jar Jar above the left lift.

Destroy the environment and the droids then continue forward. Chop down some trees before standing between the small LEGO pieces and use the Force to move them so you can get to the next area. Stack the pieces then jump on top of them to get a canister. Activate the red switches and then go left to find destructible cages holding studs and a canister. Destroy the equipment for more studs. Head right to destroy pot plants and equipment. Smash everything and pick up the canister last.

CHAPTER 4 - MOS ESPA PODRACE

Build up your LEGO studs by crashing through all the poles and fences. Stick to the right at the beginning for the boost pads. Head up the ramp to grab the canister. Smash the purple crystals in the cave and collect the canister on the right. Stick to the right when being shot at by the Tusken Raiders so you can grab the

canister after that. Stick to the right for the next two canisters and again when you go through a series of arches. When you're in the open area, hit some posts and the boost pad then quickly steer left to get the canister. Steer right and hit more boost pads and another canister. When opponents start crashing on lap 2, collect the canisters they leave behind. On Lap 3, speed through the canyon and keep right to grab the canister. Finally, hit all the boost pads at the end to beat the race time.

CHAPTER 5 - RETAKE THEED PALACE

Destroy everything in the area for studs and have Obi-Wan get up to the next platform to collect some more. Jump back down and get more studs by moving the vehicle and the trees. Chop down the trees afterwards. Switch to Panaka and grapple to the windowsill for gold and silver studs. Head to the main courtyard to battle with the droids. When it's clear scour the area for studs. Fix the ramp then continue forward collecting studs and destroying pots. Grapple with Amidala to the next area. Collect more studs then jump from windowsill to windowsill for more items. Backtrack and head right. Jump on the railing across from the round window and shoot out the glass to grab studs and a canister. Continue along smashing everything smashable. When it's clear drop down to the ground floor and switch to Obi-Wan. Unhook the crates strapped to the ground then jump on one and raise it to the next level. Continue along and jump through the broken window to get another canister. Jump into the tunnel on the right wall to return to the walkway. Collect some studs and have R2 open the next door. Open the chute in the wall, move the hook over the rubble and turn it into a floating platform. Use Amidala to reach the next section safely. Kill the next lot of droids then smash the statue on the wall and step on the statue to find another canister. Make your way down the path smashing everything as you go. Break the statue at the end for a blue stud. Go back to where you smashed the first statue and stand on a switch. Kill more droids before going through the walkway and kill more droids.

Stack the crates then have Jar Jar jump from the top of the crate to the ledge above for a canister.



Shake the painting for studs then head through the next passage. Kill some more droids before continuing on.

Have Jar Jar jump the high ledge to collect more studs

Go back to the circular room and have R2 open the door. Grab the blue stud before going up the stairs and killing the droids. Smash the lattice for more studs and grab some more behind the alcove. Smash the droids in the next courtyard then collect studs from the fountain, corners, equipment and top ledge after building a tower out of LEGO blocks. Drop back down and have Anakin jump in the chute in the wall to collect more studs. Kill more droids and collect more studs in between the pillars between the chute and walls. Continue along blasting more droids. Have Anakin ride the next chute to ledge and grab more studs including a blue one. Drop down and fix the LEGO to make a staircase. Smash up some more equipment then go up the stairs. At the top, jump to the right ledge and smash the lattice to get some studs and a canister. Go back to the staircase and fix the bridge. Go collect the fallen studs and then go back and cross the bridge. Smash and collect studs until you reach the floating platform. Jump to the next ledge and follow it to find studs and a canister. Head left then jump down to the walkway below. Double jump and smash the window. Go inside and collect the blue stud. Go all the way back to the staircase and cross the bridge again. Smash all the pots until you find a switch. Activate it then have Anakin enter the metal chute so he can collect more studs and hit the next switch. Go back and destroy everything for more studs then go back to the gate Anakin just opened. Destroy everything in your path until you reach a wall covered in Ivy. Jump over it to grab the canister and more studs. Go right and hit the grey switch. Ride the elevator and destroy all the vegetation in the next area. Use the Force to fix the next lift and open the metal chute for Anakin. Stand on the box, collect the studs and jump to the next platform. Open the next guardrails then stand on the switches to open the next door. Head through and kill the next army of droids. Spill the cups on the tables and smash the tables for some studs. Use Panaka to grapple to the walkway. Collect the studs and head upstairs to the left. Kill all the droids and follow the large windows into a room with silver studs. Set up the tables and chairs and smash the statue. Step on the switch and grab the items. Smash the table and collect everything that spills out. Use the Force on all the furniture first before smashing it to pieces and grabbing the studs. Have Amidala grapple to the alcove

above for more studs. Use Obi-Wan to jump from the tabletop to next alcove for even more studs. Then get some more by arranging the tables next to the slide wall and jumping to the alcove.

Use Amidala to run along the ledge and collect a canister.

Head up the staircase and into the circular room. Smash the statue on the left and step on the switch to open the hidden door. Smash the other statue and activate another switch. Go up the stairs for the studs then go back to the circular room. Smash the last statue and hit the switch. Head through the passage and collect the studs in between the pillars. Smash the equipment then grapple to the ledge above. Jump across the ledges to save the first pilot. Drop below and stack the crates from largest to smallest. Get on top of the crates then use the LEGO on the wall to create a platform above your head. Go back to the floor and head left. Open the door in the wall destroying anything inside. Stack more crates and jump to the platform to get the next pilot. Drop to the bottom again and go right to save two more pilots. Smash any equipment in the room then move the LEGO in the wall to make steps. Climb them to find some studs. Go back and jump from the back of the last ship to the ledges for even more studs. Go right of the hanger door's and jump to the platform above for studs. Double jump the wall to the right for more.

When on this upper ledge, use Panaka to grapple even higher for more studs

Collect the studs as you head back to the hanger. Return to the first lot of crates and jump on the platform you created. Use Obi-Wan to jump to the ledges for studs and a canister. Then use R2 to float and get the items in the air. After that, fall to the ground and have R2 open the main hangar door.

CHAPTER 6 - DARTH MAUL

Deflect the droid blasts back at them until they're toast. Then use your Force powers to throw back the yellow canisters Maul throws at you. Keep repeating this process until you can fix the bridge and move on to the next area. Use the Force on the two levers to open some secret doors. Use the Force on all the lights on the walls for lots studs. When you see the car, use the Force to make it drive around and dump studs. Put the starfighter together before you continue on.

Use Jar Jar to jump on the starfighter and jump to grab the canister.

Pick up the studs underneath the starfighter and use the Force to activate the switches. Jump on the Naboo starfighter and grab the canister. Collect the studs underneath the fighter as well. Open the little box before the long hallway for some items then jump on the little platform nearby. When you're both on the platforms, rise up and jump into the alcove before the platform falls. Collect the studs before moving on.

Unlock the door with R2 and kill anyone inside. Head to the back and stand on the switch. Then run down the hall lighting up all the buttons and collect the canister at the end.

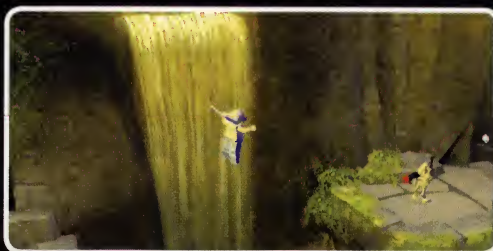
Charge at Darth Maul but instead of chasing him go through the hallway to collect the canister at the end of the hallway. Go back and jump to the higher walkways.

Grapple to the ledge above with Amidala then use Jar Jar to reach the next ledge. Kill the droids then collect the remains. Head right and use the Force on the gear to raise the yellow platform. Continue jumping from ledge to ledge until you get the canister.

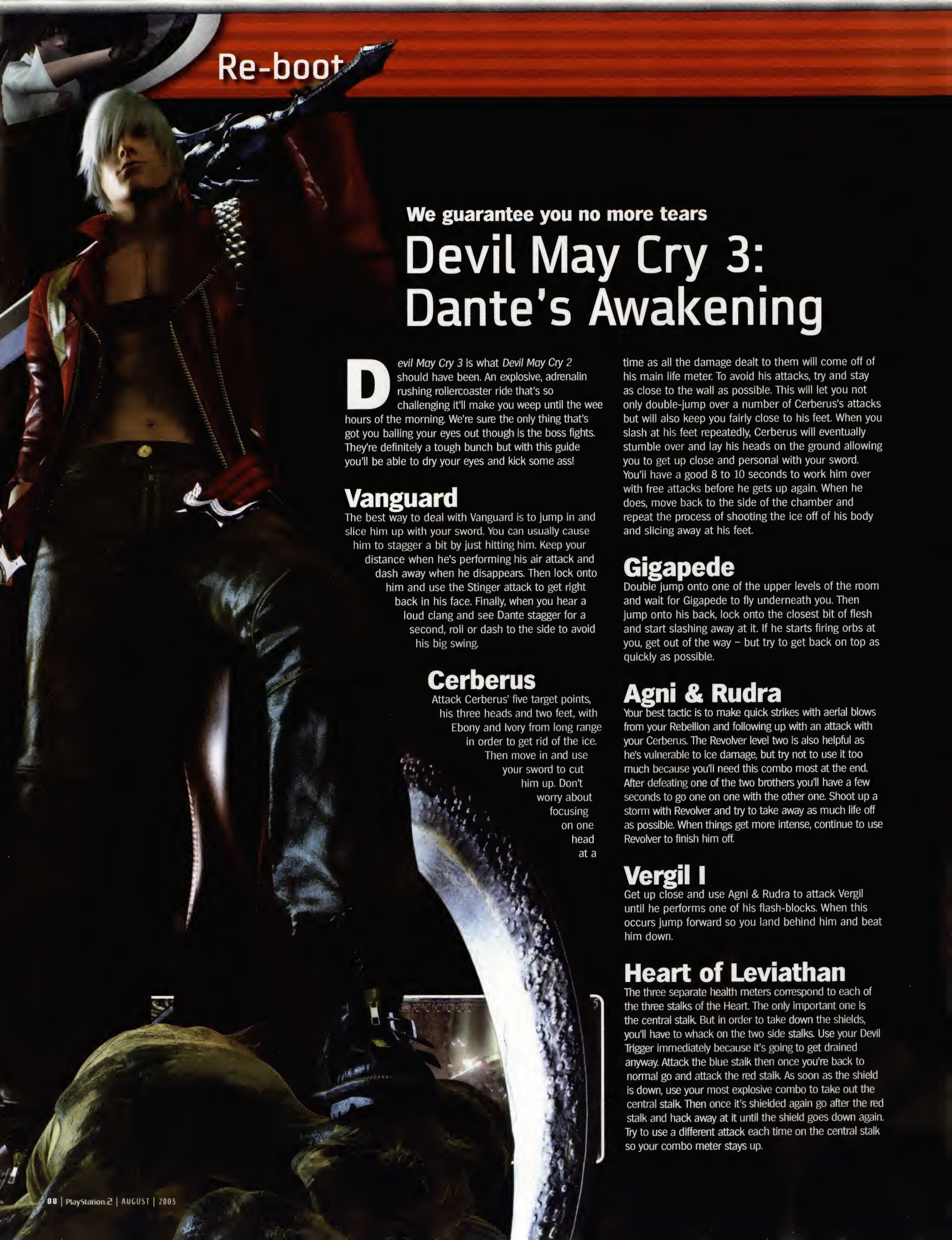
Jump from ledge to ledge until you can't jump no more. Use the Force to lower a platform and continue doing this until you're in the next area. Grab the studs then jump on the floating platforms.

Use R2 to access the panels then ride the platforms to canister.

Double jump to the next platform and kill the droids when they come to attack. Go down the left hallway and take out the commander as quickly as possible. Collect the studs and go back down the other hallway to kill the other commander. Kill everything else standing then collect the studs and move on. Deflect the attacks of the next droids before jumping on one of the platforms and meeting Darth Maul. Collect all the studs before taking him on. Jump into the beams and activate the switches for more studs. In the next hallway use the Force on the walls to open compartments and move equipment. Continue doing this until Maul goes to the next room. When you're taking him on, wait until he finishes his attacks before unleashing on him. In the final section use the Force to lower the platform low enough so you can jump on it. Then ride it to the top to get the canister. Do the same on the other two to get two more canisters. Defeat Maul by doing double jump attacks as close to him as possible. Block his shots when he starts swinging and double jump when he uses the Force. Keep with this method before getting ready for Episode II.



NEXT MONTH...
PART TWO

A full-page background image of Dante from Devil May Cry 3. He is standing, looking slightly to the left, wearing his signature red leather jacket with yellow trim, a black tank top, and black leather pants. He has white hair and a goatee. The background is dark and moody, with some architectural elements visible.

Re-boot

We guarantee you no more tears

Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening

Devil May Cry 3 is what *Devil May Cry 2* should have been. An explosive, adrenalin rushing rollercoaster ride that's so challenging it'll make you weep until the wee hours of the morning. We're sure the only thing that's got you balling your eyes out though is the boss fights. They're definitely a tough bunch but with this guide you'll be able to dry your eyes and kick some ass!

Vanguard

The best way to deal with Vanguard is to jump in and slice him up with your sword. You can usually cause him to stagger a bit by just hitting him. Keep your distance when he's performing his air attack and dash away when he disappears. Then lock onto him and use the Stinger attack to get right back in his face. Finally, when you hear a loud clang and see Dante stagger for a second, roll or dash to the side to avoid his big swing.

Cerberus

Attack Cerberus' five target points, his three heads and two feet, with Ebony and Ivory from long range in order to get rid of the ice. Then move in and use your sword to cut him up. Don't worry about focusing on one head at a

time as all the damage dealt to them will come off of his main life meter. To avoid his attacks, try and stay as close to the wall as possible. This will let you not only double-jump over a number of Cerberus's attacks but will also keep you fairly close to his feet. When you slash at his feet repeatedly, Cerberus will eventually stumble over and lay his heads on the ground allowing you to get up close and personal with your sword. You'll have a good 8 to 10 seconds to work him over with free attacks before he gets up again. When he does, move back to the side of the chamber and repeat the process of shooting the ice off of his body and slicing away at his feet.

Gigapede

Double jump onto one of the upper levels of the room and wait for Gigapede to fly underneath you. Then jump onto his back, lock onto the closest bit of flesh and start slashing away at it. If he starts firing orbs at you, get out of the way – but try to get back on top as quickly as possible.

Agni & Rudra

Your best tactic is to make quick strikes with aerial blows from your Rebellion and following up with an attack with your Cerberus. The Revolver level two is also helpful as he's vulnerable to Ice damage, but try not to use it too much because you'll need this combo most at the end. After defeating one of the two brothers you'll have a few seconds to go one on one with the other one. Shoot up a storm with Revolver and try to take away as much life off as possible. When things get more intense, continue to use Revolver to finish him off.

Vergil I

Get up close and use Agni & Rudra to attack Vergil until he performs one of his flash-blocks. When this occurs jump forward so you land behind him and beat him down.

Heart of Leviathan

The three separate health meters correspond to each of the three stalks of the Heart. The only important one is the central stalk. But in order to take down the shields, you'll have to whack on the two side stalks. Use your Devil Trigger immediately because it's going to get drained anyway. Attack the blue stalk then once you're back to normal go and attack the red stalk. As soon as the shield is down, use your most explosive combo to take out the central stalk. Then once it's shielded again go after the red stalk and hack away at it until the shield goes down again. Try to use a different attack each time on the central stalk so your combo meter stays up.

Nevan

Pick your moment and charge in with Jet Stream or another quick-dash attack and start swinging away at Nevan. When all of the bats are gone, Nevan will be stunned for a second as she collects her darkness again. So go crazy like Naz after a bottle of Tequila with Cerberus. After Nevan loses around two-thirds of her full health bar, she'll take it up a notch. Just use the same tactics you were before. Use your Devil Trigger in the last stage and Cerberus to hit her as hard as you can until she dies. Grab the Nevan weapon and get the hell out of there.

Beowulf

Shoot away from long distance with Ebony & Ivory while Beowulf is attacking. Wait until he's standing on two feet before moving in for the kill. His weak spot is his good eye. So use Rebellion's Aerial Rave or Helm Breaker in Swordmaster to slash away at it until he goes down for good.

Geryon

Switch between Spiral and Ebony and Ivory when Geryon is standing still for a second. But if he stands around for any longer then start using melee attacks on the horse part with your Devil Trigger activated. When he falls over, unload with everything you've got. When it's all over grab the Quicksilver Style.

Vergil II

Concentrate on using melee attacks for this dance. The only time he's truly vulnerable is just after one of his own attacks. So when he's about to start a move, go to town on him with Rebellion or Agni & Rudra. Only use your Devil Trigger when you're attacking. When he's using his Devil Trigger keep your distance. Then when he shifts back, use the same technique as above. When he's on his last legs use your Holy Water to finish him off once and for all.

Lady

Use either Stinger or Straight when she stands still. When you've knocked her off her feet, pump away with Beowulf until she gets back up. When Lady starts using grenades, you can dash in when it's clear and stab her while she's throwing. Use your Devil Trigger attacks towards the end of the battle. Best to wait when she's about to use her homing missiles attack. When the bitch is dead, take her Rocket Launcher. Whammy!

Doppelganger

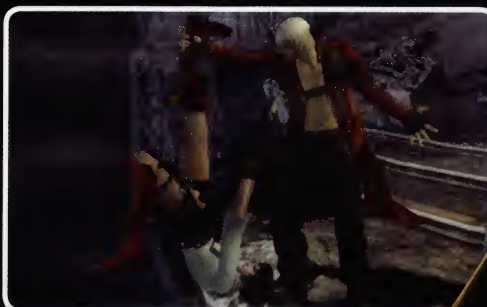
Revolve around the arena that you're in and flip open the shutters with Agni & Rudra's Jet-Stream move. Doppelganger will then be frozen in the center of the arena and vulnerable to your attacks. So just unload on him with Devil Trigger attacks and combos. Be ready to jump away after you land a couple of solid combos on him. Keep up with this strategy and it'll be all over.

Arkham

Activate your Devil Trigger and launch in for melee attacks. After you deal enough damage he'll sink into the ether beneath your feet and call upon his Legions. So bring on the Kalina Ann rocket launcher and collect the Devil Trigger orbs when they appear. Continue using this strategy even when Virgil joins in.

Vergil III

Take up a holding position near him and maintain it as he moves around. Then dart in and out of his melee attack range. You can also get a good shot in after you've dodged one of his attacks. You can also use Air Trick to immediately close in on him and start your combo off. But when you do, immediately flip over to Devil Trigger mode to regenerate some health and deal extra damage. When he blocks one of your attacks, jump and dash away from him to avoid his next attack.



WHAT IS RE-PLAY?

This section will breathe new life into your old games. Each month we'll show you amazing things to find or set challenges for you to take up against us. We also welcome input from you. Write in and tell us if you've found something cool that you'd like to share with the other readers. Even if you haven't found anything yourself, write in and tell us what game you'd like to get more out of and we'll do the searching for you. Email us at OPS2@derwenthoward.com.au or send it the old-fashioned way to PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355.

There's nothing worse than shelling out the big bucks on a game you play for a few weeks before it falls behind the TV. We've been digging around the games room looking for any old gems we can temporarily resurrect for you lot, and your own secrets and challenges have been great so far. Keep them coming people!

Be sure to check out our official challenges too. Record on videotape or photograph your best efforts and send them in to PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW, 1355, marked "OPS2 Challenges". We'll print the top results in future issues. The highest score in each of the two official challenges will win the game of the month, so go nuts!



Reader Simon Kent, who provided last month's reader challenge, has sent in this Easter Egg from *Goldeneye: Rogue Agent*. We're going to need to start paying this guy a salary if he keeps this up! If you've found some crazy hidden extras like this, let us know and we'll try to squeeze them in too! Here's Simon's step-by-step guide on finding the secret Golden Gun for use in the single-player game.

- ❶ Play Hong Kong Level in Single Player Mode.
- ❷ Just after the cut scene where you find out there is actually no sniper rifle, turn around to the right and you will see a small fire burning next to a fallen pillar that is resting against a standing pillar.
- ❸ Go up to the standing pillar, crouch down and move forward. You will go right through the pillar and end up in a small space. This is the hardest part to do for those who haven't tried this before, so it may take a bit of practise.
- ❹ Look right and you'll see another pillar that has fallen across the width of the space. Make sure you're still crouching and move to the left hand corner of the back room. At this point, you'll need to pass through the corner of the wall.
- ❺ Once you've done this you'll be in a very small space before you get into a larger room. At this point you will see a pair of boots.
- ❻ When you move out into the larger room, you will see that it's flooded with water, and has a boat in the middle of it with a cow standing there.
- ❼ Go to the back of the cow and you will find the Golden Gun.
- ❽ The gun is usable, but it does occupy both hands. By going back the way you came, you can then use the Golden Gun until its bullets run out. Each bullet on target will kill an enemy in one shot, so use them wisely.

BUGGER!

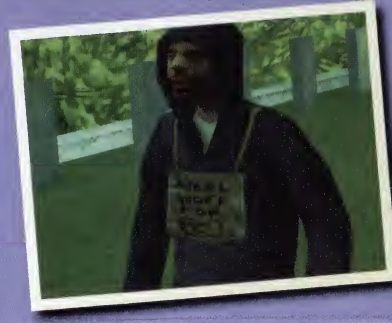
There are some things you just don't want to see on an extremely important mission. Pictured here is morale reducing item number 27 – a human skeleton. Nothing to see here, Snake, move along mate...



THAT'S COOL!

POTHEAD

Greg Reid, SA, sent in this snapshot he claims to have taken of a down-on-his-luck pedestrian in *GTA: San Andreas*. We haven't found him ourselves yet, but if he's yanking our chain let us know and we'll pay him a visit and eat his PS2!



THAT'S COOL!

THAT'S COOL!

CHALLENGE!



WINNERS

The hills have been alive this month with the sound of screeching metal, breaking glass and burning rubber. We knew a crash challenge would satisfy all your destructive fantasies. Sorry we had to stipulate you needed to be in World Tour mode (we know a lot of you were probably itching to break out your fire engines) but we had to make it fair for everyone. Congratulations to our winner, who picked himself up a copy of *Area 51*, and everyone who entered!

JUNE READER CHALLENGE - BURNOUT 3 - EXIT THE DRAGON



TOP SCORES!

Nathan Secchi, VIC
1,644,368

Matt Mangold, NT
1,535,432

Sebastian D'Alonzo, WA
1,517,240

Ada Tran, NSW
1,487,184

Adam Barrett, VIC
1,476,260

JUNE CHALLENGE - MIDNIGHT CLUB 3 - SWEET RIDES

OPS2 readers have been filling our mailbox with their favourite dubbed-out rides all month. Some of them were covered in so much bling it was hard still find a car beneath it all. We eventually whittled it down to just two, and the muscle-bound yank tank came out with the copy of *Area 51*. Congratulations to all those who entered!

WINNER

Amanda Westwood, NSW



RUNNER UP

Shaun Heath, VIC



READER CHALLENGES

CHALLENGE!



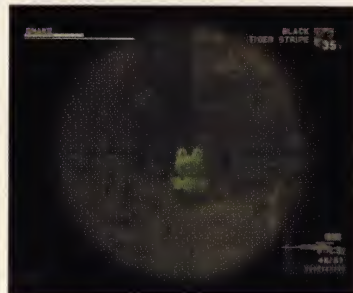
CHLOE MCINNES - WA

Win the triathlon in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*!



BIG_SMOKE - OPS2 FORUM

Get *Midnight Club 3* and get a fully upgraded Hummer to do 250 m/ph. It's not easy. You can check your score in the stats screen under car stats.



MELAKUDUDE - OPS2 FORUM

Has anyone tried to get all of the frogs in *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*?



LEON, OPS2 FORUM

In *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect*, under Challenges, 'Behead the Undead', what's your highest score for 'Boxing Clever'? I got 160500 on my first go. I also got a 5x zombie combo!

OFFICIAL CHALLENGE

We haven't had an official *GTA: San Andreas* challenge for a while - and seeing as though it's back at number one on the charts eight months after release, it's time to revisit it. Head to Las Venturas airport and go and activate the 'Military Service' checkpoint and go and activate the 'Military Service' checkpoint and go and activate the 'Military Service' checkpoint. Don't be afraid to wash off some speed to ensure you don't miss a corona - you'll lose more time if you need to circle back around. To be competitive, it's probably best to make sure you're not too far over the four and a half minute mark. Record or photograph your time, email or post them to the usual address and the winner will net a copy of game of the month, *Tekken 5*!



WIN! TEKKEN 5

PlayStation
GAME
OF THE
MONTH

CHALLENGE!

OFFICIAL READER CHALLENGE

Jackie Ayers from WA has modified one of our challenges from a few months ago - she wants a *Need for Speed Underground 2* rematch and this time there's no room for mercy! Jackie has set a best single drift score of 185,723, and she wants to know who among our readers has the cajoles to beat it. It doesn't matter where you do it, or how many laps it takes you, we just want your best single drift score - not your total drift score. Record or photograph your score, email or post them to the usual address and the winner will pick up a copy of game of the month, *Tekken 5*! We're looking forward to seeing some totally killer figures so get cracking!



WIN! TEKKEN 5

PlayStation
GAME
OF THE
MONTH

CHALLENGE!

CODE VAULT

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Here are the codes you should use.



Yeah those arrows mean you need to turn, jackass!

SRS: Street Racing Syndicate

1996 Supra RZ
SICKJZA

1999 Mitsubishi Eclipse GS-T
IGOTGST

2004 Toyota Celica GT-S action package
MYTCGTS

Free car repair
FIXITUP

Mazda RX-8
RENESES

Pac-man vinyl
GORETRO

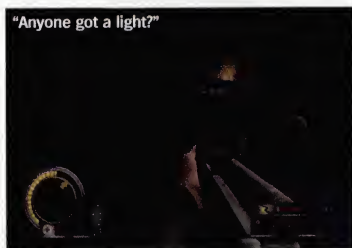
Police car
GOTPOPO

Subaru Impreza STI
SICKGDB

Get pulled over three times in Street mode and you'll get off with a warning.
LETMEGO

Medal of Honor: European Assault

Disable shellshock
ⓧ, ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓐ, ⓐ, ⓐ



Hide HUD
ⓧ, ↓, ⓧ, ↑, ⓐ, ⓧ

Kill nemesis
↓, ⓧ, ⓧ, ↑, ⓧ

Pickup OSS document
↑, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ↑, ⓧ

Player suicide (single-player only)
ⓧ, ⓐ, ⓧ, →, ⓐ, ⓧ

Unlimited ammo
Password: MERCENARIES

Full Spectrum Warrior
All enemies displayed on GPS
CANADIANVISION

Big head mode
NICKWEST

Cloak stealth mode
BULGARIANNINJA

Opfords will have no cover
NAKEDOP4

Unlimited rockets and grenades
ROCKETARENA

Unlock all bonuses
LASVEGAS

Unlock all chapters
APANPAPANSNALE9

US Army version
HA2P1PY9TUR5TLE

Authentic mode
SWEDISHARMY

FIFA Street

Miniature players
Pause game play, then hold ⓧ+ⓐ then press ↑, ←, ↓, ↓, →, ↓, ↑, ←, L1

Unlock all apparel
To unlock all apparel including shoes simply go to the Main Menu and then hold ⓧ+ⓐ while pressing →, →, ←, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↓, ←, L1

Juiced

Unlock all tracks and cars in arcade mode
On code section enter "PING" to unlock all tracks and cars in the arcade mode.

Unlimited Money

On code section enter "FAST" to get unlimited money in arcade mode.

Area 51

Shotgun

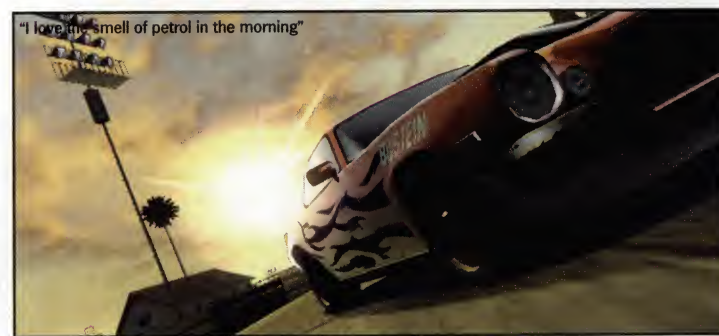
Pause the game then press ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓐ, ←, ⓧ to start the game with a shotgun.

Invincibility

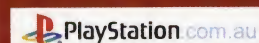
Pause game play, then press ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓐ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ

Level skip

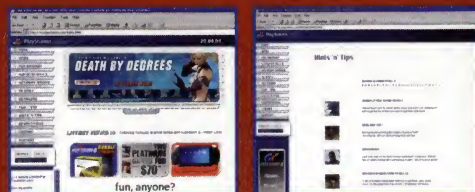
Select "Arcade" at the main menu, then aim at the black border of the boxes with "Beginning" or "Warp Ahead" to begin further into the game than normal.



ULTIMATE CHEAT SITE



HEAD ON OVER TO [HTTP://AU.PLAYSTATION.COM/](http://au.playstation.com/) TO GET THE ULTIMATE CHEAT FIX. YOU'LL NEED TO REGISTER WITH THE SITE (BUT IT'S FREE AND EASY TO DO) THEN YOU'LL HAVE FULL ACCESS TO ALL THE CHEATS.



GET YOURSELF OVER TO
[HTTP://AU.PLAYSTATION.COM](http://au.playstation.com)

MTV screen
Magazine Reader

Brain analysis

Musical Lobe

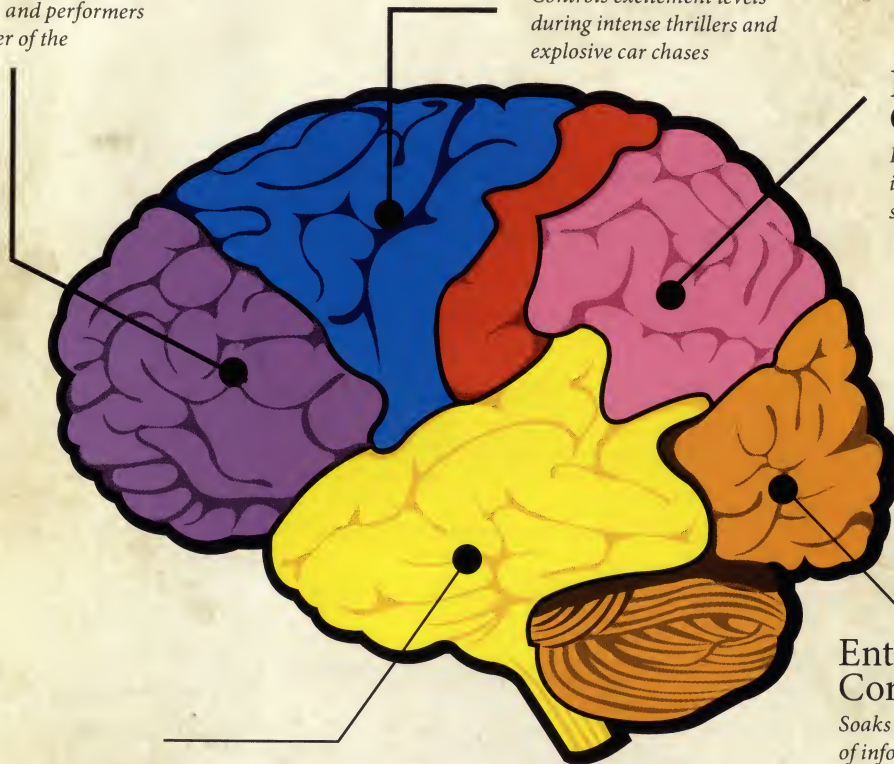
Used to identify and appreciate the coolest tunes and performers from every corner of the music world

Movie Lobe

Controls excitement levels during intense thrillers and explosive car chases

Fashion Cerebellum

Responsible for ensuring the body is always covered in the funkiest, spunkiest trends



Junk Stem

An overworked clump of cells that processes an immense amount of essential trivia, mind-warping fun and more than a little silliness

Entertainment Cortex

Soaks up and stores masses of info about entertainment technology, videogames, TV, DVDs and more

Free excitement-packed brain transplant
included with every issue of *MTV screen*
magazine – on sale NOW!



gamestation

Just got your PS2? Looking for the a safe bet to blow your hard-earned on? *OPS2's* GameStation is your best resource for finding top quality PS2 games. Some might be a little long in the tooth, but you'll probably be able to pick them up second-hand. Others are quite recent or Platinum titles, so finding them won't be a hassle. All are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

TOP 5 GAME SOUNDTRACKS

HITMAN: CONTRACTS

Composer Jesper Kyd's score picked up the best original music award at the 2005 BAFTA awards. His dynamic blend of electronic and cinematic music is also heard in the other *Hitman* games and *Freedom Fighters*. Unless you're deaf, in which case you should stop reading...



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

MGS2 and MGS3 aren't the only things on Harry Gregson-Williams' CV. His rousing tunes can also be heard in *Team America*, *Welcome to the Jungle*, both *Shrek* films, *Armageddon*, *Man on Fire* and *Kingdom of Heaven* – and that's just a few.



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

A lot of *Vice City's* appeal can be credited to its great soundtrack – a massive cross section of '80s music featuring the best and worst of the pastel decade had to offer.



DRIV3R

The game may have had its faults but the soundtrack was fantastic. 'Gimme Danger' from Iggy and the Stooges is a highlight, even though Iggy is still as ugly as sin.



MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

MOH: Frontline and *Call of Duty: Finest Hour* both had composer Michael Giacchino behind the baton. He's also provided the ear candy for films like *The Incredibles*.



AMPLITUDE	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: With diverse tracks, <i>Amplitude</i> is a music lover's dream. And the more rhythm games that don't involve lurching around can only be a good thing too.	
AREA 51	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: <i>Area 51</i> is a very cool little game and well worth a look for FPS shooters and twitchy loners who believe the truth is out there.	
ATV: OFFROAD FURY 2	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Extends on the awesome original with new riders and tracks, and plenty of countryside to tear up.	
BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: An excellent game in a crowded market. A distinctly more mature take on war featuring levels of blood, foul language and sheer desperation not seen before.	
BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: It's eye-meltingly spunky and so fast you'll you won't be able to blink. Stop looking for an arcade racer that's more fun than <i>Burnout 3</i> – you won't find one.	
COLD WINTER	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A surprisingly superb first-person shooter that brings a lot of fresh ideas, a lot of blood and a lot of damage. Definitely worth checking out.	
COLIN MCGRAE RALLY 2005	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: WRC 4 has trumped it but <i>Colin</i> still has great damage modelling, slick handling and a roster of modern monsters and historical rally beasts.	
DESTROY ALL HUMANS!	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Buzzing with energy and conceptual originality. It's a game anyone can pick up and play. Not too deep, but annihilating puny Earthlings has never been more fun.	
DEUS EX: THE CONSPIRACY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: <i>Deus Ex</i> is the first ever FPS where the solution to your problems isn't always to go in guns blazing. Instead, it combines elements of RPG and strategy that force you to use creativity and lateral thinking to get through.	
DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: This is the <i>Devil May Cry</i> you remember – stunning design, visuals, effects and presentation. It's a work of art so grab it or you'll be the one crying.	
DRIV3R	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Astonishing damage and brilliant driving physics. Screaming through cities in hulking muscle cars or 18-wheelers, <i>Driv3r</i> is buggy – but it's every great Hollywood car chase crammed into one game.	
ESPN NBA 2K5	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Slick presentation, great graphics and innovative modes allows ESPN NBA 2K5 to slam-dunk the competition.	
ESPN NFL 2K5	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: If every game had the attention to detail this puppy had this list would be a helluva lot longer. Awesome broadcast-style presentation, great graphics and deep gameplay.	
ESPN NHL 2K5	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: We'll be pucked if you can find a better game of ice hockey for the price of <i>ESPN NHL 2K5</i> . Deep and rewarding, improved fighting controls and sexy visuals.	
EYETOY: PLAY 2	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Do we need to explain? The innovation and introduction of the video camera to gaming is brilliant. It's just one reason why the PS2 is so cutting edge.	
FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 2	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: All the strategy, violence and glitzy thrills of boxing minus the brain damaging concussions. If it were a boxer it would rightly quip, "I am the greatest".	
FINAL FANTASY X	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: This was one of the first games on the PS2 to really try and stretch the machine's graphics capabilities to the limit. The result is simply breathtaking.	
FREEDOM FIGHTERS	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: For the first time ever, commanding squads and third-person shooting is so easy you won't even notice you're doing it. If you don't have it – find it.	
FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: The bomb for strategy nuts, intense street skirmishes and ultra-realistic gameplay based on authentic military tactics. It may be a bit too dull for some however.	
THE GETAWAY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: No coin collection, no magic bonuses, just a whole lot of gritty crime action set in a tough old city. Swearing, violence and not a shred of political correctness...	
THE GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY	OVERALL 07
What makes it great: A totally cinematic and engaging experience let down by too few gameplay improvements. It's like a potty-mouthed version of <i>The Bill</i> .	
GOD OF WAR	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: <i>God of War</i> combines bloody action, puzzle-solving and cliff jumping in a brilliantly realised, beautiful-looking epic that rocks HARD on every level.	
GRAND THEFT AUTO III	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: This is the greatest videogame ever made. Run, drive, fly, swim, boat, cycle, ride or even skydive you way through a whole state of mayhem. It's beyond debate – this is gaming perfection.	
GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: Takes everything great about <i>GTAIII</i> , adds countless extra features and paints it in '80s pastel colours. This game does almost nothing wrong.	

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: This is the greatest videogame ever made. Run, drive, fly, swim, boat, cycle, ride or even skydive you way through a whole state of mayhem. It's beyond debate – this is gaming perfection.	
GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The ultimate realism of the 150+ cars – each made up of more than 4000 polygons – made <i>GT3</i> THE racing sim. That was, until <i>GT4</i> of course.	
GRAN TURISMO 4	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: The biggest, most authentic and most realistic racing simulator ever. 700 unique cars from 1886 to 2005 that handle exactly like their real-world counterparts. It's a car nut's wet dream.	
HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASIN	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It's ethically dubious but there's no doubt about how good <i>Silent Assassin</i> is. Multiple solutions, fantastic rag-doll physics and enough atmosphere to choke a horse.	
HITMAN: CONTRACTS	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Doesn't really flow as well as <i>Silent Assassin</i> did, but retains the multiple solutions, an arsenal of weapons, an award winning score and great level design. Tense and uncompromising.	
ICO	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The dreamy-looking, wonderfully peaceful puzzling adventure game, along with an entirely unique feel make people fall in love with <i>Ico</i> . Experience it for yourself!	
JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It features large sprawling lands where the weather changes as often as it does in Sydney, hundreds of fun mini-games, challenges and missions. Wicked.	
JAK II: RENEGADE	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: Infusing <i>GTA</i> -style gameplay into the <i>Jak & Daxter</i> world has made this the first platformer that appeals to both infants and adults alike.	
JAK 3	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Rounds out the trilogy in style – <i>Jak's</i> evolution from pixie-eared pansy to platforming badass is complete. Great mix of genres that'll keep you on your toes to the end.	
JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: The change to a third-person perspective allowed <i>Bond's</i> shooting, car chasing and fighting to be brought together in the first game that really feels like a <i>Bond</i> movie.	
JUICED	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: It can't match <i>Midnight Club 3</i> for thrills, but it boasts a far more impressive stable for than <i>NFSU2</i> . Not revolutionary, but a solid racer for hardcore rev-heads.	
KILLZONE	OVERALL 07
What makes it great: Some of the best weapons and reload animations on PS2, atmospheric battle zones and brilliant character design. Very ambitious, just a little sloppy around the edges.	
KINGDOM HEARTS	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: In spite of the Disney characters and settings that make it seem just for kids, <i>Kingdom Hearts</i> poses a surprisingly difficult yet rewarding challenge for RPG fans.	
LEGO STAR WARS	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Parents should buy <i>LEGO Star Wars</i> for their kids, no matter how old they are. It's the most fun we've had pushing coloured blocks around since <i>Tetris</i> .	
LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Gorgeous and packed to the gills with sword-swinging action, it's as close as it gets to being in the movie without having to go to New Zealand.	
MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: The sense of freedom the game allows you to feel. Seamless transitions from space battles to FPS action give a real sense of a huge world that you inhabit.	
MASHED	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Totally addictive multiplayer – make sure you've got a multitap. This is why you got into gaming to begin with.	
MEDAL OF HONOUR: FRONTLINE	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The opening level, the beach landing on Omaha, is perhaps one of the most atmospheric and moving game moments to date. Still one of the PS2's best shooters.	
MEDAL OF HONOUR: RISING SUN	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It's surprisingly short but it's got some pretty awe-inspiring moments. Escape a sinking battleship in Pearl Harbour, sink a Japanese aircraft carrier – all in a day's work.	
METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: It combined an explosive single-player experience that features a hilarious story with smashing multiplayer games. Need to know more?	
MERCENARIES	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: An impeccably designed and action-packed sandbox of free-roaming combat. Steal choppers, jack tanks – <i>Mercenaries</i> is fun, fun, fun 'til the commies take you C4 away.	
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, gripping story.	
METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: It's the ultimate lone-soldier adventure, packed with riveting combat and a stunning jungle setting. Acquire immediately.	

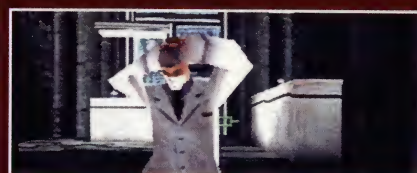
Your definitive guide to the ever-expanding library of PlayStation 2 games

MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Rockstar has given you lots of ways to enjoy this game but no matter how you play it, it's quality from start to finish. Tuner cars, muscle cars, luxury cars, SUVs, superbikes, choppers – all faster than a greased cheetah.	
MIDWAY'S ARCADE TREASURES	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: The other arcade classics are good fun but it's really about Root Beer Topper – hands-down the best simulation of serving beer to rowdy drunks ever.	
MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Still a great fighter, despite a few rough edges. Multiple fatalities and environmental fatalities keep the gore to a maximum.	
MOTOGP4	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A solid racer that covers a lot of bases, but MotoGP5 will have to take it up a gear to stay in front.	
MX UNLEASHED	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: One of the best MX games on PS2. Huge freestyle countryside, great riding physics and addictive bonus vehicles like a stunt plane, Baja Buggy, monster truck and even a chopper. Spot on.	
NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: 2 fast and 2 furious for the likes of most other street racers, the drag racing alone is worth the price of admission. Get in, buckle up, shut up and hang on!	
NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 2	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Bigger, badder and faster than its already impressive older brother, if the huge city and extra rides can't satisfy your need for speed we don't know what will.	
ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON SIEGE	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: An epic time-travelling samurai adventure featuring everyone's favourite Frenchman Jean Reno. A classic in anyone's book.	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It captures everything that made the original a classic and combines it with slick graphics, smooth gameplay and a hot chick to fight alongside you.	
PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It's gone down a decidedly darker road than its enchanting predecessor but it still one of the best adventures money can buy.	
PROJECT: SNOWBLIND	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Kicks off with a bang and never lets up. Gob-smacking graphics, an explosive arsenal and consistently exiting and varied gameplay.	
PROJECT ZERO II: PROJECT BUTTERFLY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Quite possibly the scariest game ever made – Project Zero II plays superbly. Wear dark undies though.	
PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: If you enjoy sports games, especially long bouts of multiplayer tomfoolery – look no further. Best soccer action on PS2.	
PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: This psychic-charged jaunt takes the third-person shooter, levitates it into the air and makes it slap itself involuntarily.	
THE PUNISHER	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Far more loyal to comic than it's celluloid sibling – bring on the bullets, break out the body bags and prepare for punishment. You won't regret it.	
RATCHET AND CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The sheer number of the gadgets and crazy weapons alone would make this game worth playing. Hilarious fun.	
RATCHET AND CLANK 3: UP YOUR ARSENAL	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The single player game is fantastic, but the online multiplayer mode puts most other shooters to shame. Great gadgets and humour abound.	
RED DEAD REVOLVER	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A great spaghetti western shooter bursting with cool characters, duels and frontier towns, brilliant presentation and a sweet Sergio Leone-style soundtrack.	
RESIDENT EVIL CODE VERONICA X	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Huge, scary and full of flesh-chewing zombies, RE: CVX still looks appetising after more than two years. No wonder gamers are already salivating for the next one.	
RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: What's the only enemy that's less popular than Nazis or zombies? You guessed it, Zombified Nazis! A slick shooter set during a very fictional part of WWII.	
REZ	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Super-stylish retro-futuristic graphics, intense old-school shoot-'em-up gameplay and pumping dance tracks from top artists which remix themselves as you play.	
RUGBY 2005	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Minor AI quibbles aside we've finally got a game of rugby that looks as good as other top-tier sports titles. About bloody time, too!	
RUGBY LEAGUE	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: League fans have long been neglected in the video game world, but no more – this captures all the action of the NRL in one satisfying package.	
SECOND SIGHT	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Stylish, gripping and great fun. Possess your enemies, throw them around the room with your mind or just shoot 'em. Definitely worth looking into.	
SHADOW OF ROME	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: A superb realisation of bloody arena combat. Some of the maximum fun you can have with a sword. For those who are about to die – we salute you.	
SILENT HILL 3	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: One of the nastiest games on PS2 – arguably scarier than Silent Hill 4. We dare you to play it alone with the lights out.	
THE SIMPSONS: HIT AND RUN	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: When it comes to GTA rip-offs they don't get any more blatant than this, but walking around a living and breathing Springfield is so much fun that you won't care.	

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: It's slicker than the original Sims, and adds extra freedom for your little computer people. Being able to get out of the house means you'll be playing for even longer.	
SINGSTAR	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Karaoke with an edge – this gem will change your lounge room forever and give your significant other a reason not to loathe the PS2.	
SINGSTAR PARTY	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Another 30 songs to crucify and new multiplayer modes. It can even be used in conjunction with the first game.	
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Great platforming for all ages. Plenty of substance, great visuals and offset characters. Well worth a look – especially for the younger set.	
SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Without a shadow of a doubt, the best Network Gaming title for the PS2. Unparalleled game modes and options mean the online warfare will rage for years.	
SOUL CALIBUR II	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: It's the easiest fighting game to get into, but to be truly great will take years! The characters, weapons and the mind-blowing special moves are second to none.	
SPIDER-MAN 2	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: A massive, free-roaming Manhattan complete with every major landmark – swing, jump, sprint and dive anywhere you want. Best superhero game ever.	
SSX 3	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It's one mountain with an avalanche of features. You decide whether you want to race against your arch-nemesis, hang out on the half-pipe or just explore.	
STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Live the battles from the Star Wars films on the front lines with weapons and vehicles from all the films so far. Need this game, you do.	
SUPER MONKEY BALL DELUXE	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Simple, enjoyable game design at its finest. And its multiplayer mode is the only way you can play with your mates' balls and still look them in the eye.	
TEKKEN 4	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Good looks. If Tekken was a girl she'd have Kylie Minogue's bon-bon and Shannon Elizabeth's jubbles.	
TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: The best golf game on PS2 – the single-player novelty may wear off but it's perfect when it's too wet for you and your mates to hit the greens.	
TIME CRISIS 3	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Namco's feverishly fast gunplay, cranked up a notch or 10. TC3 is one of the first shooting games to successfully integrate a weapon switching function.	
TIMESPLITTERS 2	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: The fastest, smoothest first-person shooter ever, complete with masses of challenges and link-up support for up to 16 players at once!	
TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: More fun than we thought possible. Super smooth, super stylish and the best reason yet to go online!	
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL	OVERALL 10
What makes it great: The level of immersion the game creates. The stealth combined with the shadowy environs truly add up to an involving experience. Plus the gadgets rock!	
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Adds a great multiplayer mode and a few new modes to the already brilliant package – it's just a little on the short side.	
TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Slick, stylish, and cooler than a Sugar Daddy, Chaos Theory is the best "pure" stealth game on the PS2. If you haven't got into the series yet, now is the time.	
TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: A huge Vice City-style playing area with more extreme skating and loads more missions to work through than previous Hawk games. And they were fantastic enough already!	
TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA	OVERALL 08
What makes it great: Its lack of originality saw it labelled by some as simply GTA: LA, but the addition of Intense John Woo-style shootouts make this a brilliant, if brief, roller coaster ride.	
V8 SUPERCARS 2	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Offensively good graphics, stunning real-time damage, great handling and our very own V8 Supercars and tracks – why don't you own this already?	
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: An amazingly intuitive, super-deep fighting system that uses three buttons in the best possible way so that fights are all based on reactions rather than memory.	
WIPEOUT: FUSION	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: It's a face-meltingly fast, futuristic rollercoaster of a racing game from a series that modern gaming owes more to than some people realise. Enough said.	
WRC 4	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: Besides carrying the official license, WRC 4 also features authentic rally car handling, simple controls and some of the greatest rally courses this side of Gran Turismo.	
WWE: SMACKDOWN! VS RAW	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The best there is, the there was, and the best there ever shall be – at least, until the next Smackdown! of course.	
XIII	OVERALL 09
What makes it great: The graphics actually use cel shading to great effect (for one of the only times ever). You feel as if you've wandered into a three-dimensional comic book.	



Not even the greatest gaming shaman would've seen this one coming. *Syphon Filter* had a lot of things holding it back. It was an original title made by a small and relatively unknown company, it had nowhere near the marketing capacity of other action big boys, and it was instantly compared to *Metal Gear Solid*, a game that had then recently sent shockwaves through the PlayStation universe. In spite of all this, *Syphon Filter* became a sleeper hit and went on to be a million-seller. Why? Because it rocked harder than a British nanny. The level design was exceptional and all-American hard-nut Gabe Logan's arsenal was second to none. We



don't think we're alone in thinking his long-range taser was one of the sweetest anti-scumbag devices ever concocted. Remember how they'd start to smoke before going up in flames? Ah, good times. The controls were a breeze, and it's lucky they were because *Syphon Filter* out-paced every other action game out there. Quite possibly one of the most surprising and important games of 1999, *Syphon Filter* was an essential part of any self-respecting PlayStation owner's library. *Syphon Filter 2* had some brilliant moments and introduced a slick two-player mode, but the original was unbeatable.

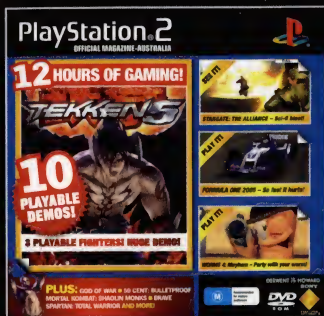


LOVECHILD



Fusing the one-man, balls-first bullet festival of *Command and Conquer* with the one-man, brains-first sneak fest of *Metal Gear Solid*, *Syphon Filter* rocked from all angles.





on the dvd

PLAYABLE DEMOS



TEKKEN 5

DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**

GAME TYPE: **BEAT EM UP**

OUT: **JULY**

PLAYERS: **1**

The Iron Fist Tournament is back and looking better than ever. In this demo you'll get to throw down some fisticuffs with three of the 30 combatants, Asuka, Feng and Jin, and battle it out on five of the stunning arenas from the final game. However, these arenas are all destructible so they won't look this good for very long. If you think you know Jin, well you don't know jack because all of his combinations have changed. As for Asuka and Feng, they're new to the series so be gentle with them. Not too gentle though because they've got some nasty combos that are just waiting to be unleashed. It's also worth checking out the opening FMV. If you think *Tekken 5* looks good now then wait until PS3. The gameplay will look as awesome as that opening movie.



We'd love a money tree as much as anyone - hell, we even planted a \$10 note to try and grow one. Games certainly aren't free, but our demo disc is!

So we here at OPS2 have put together a relief package for all those with wallets emptier than Jessica Simpson's head. *Tekken 5* leads the charge and delivers an ass kicking like never before. This brawler is so good it's even replaced *Soul Calibur II* for our lunchtime battles (Tristan is still losing though - will he ever learn?). However, if you want to get your motor running then *Formula One 05* is just the prescription you need. As you'll see from the demo, the game has been given a major tune up. For the younger set we've got the gorgeous *Brave*, but big guys shouldn't be embarrassed by checking this one out too - it's a solid platformer and as addictive as the skin on KFC chicken. Speaking of addictive, those spineless slitherers are back in *Worms 4: Mayhem*. Anyone who has spent hours calling air-strikes and launching cow bombs will be right at home with this one. Finally, RPG fans can get a hit of some character building with *Ys: Ark of Napishtim*. You'll forget all about *Final Fantasy* after an hour of playing this.

This package should see you through the month and then some. You know it!

PAUL FREW
Staff Writer

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **ⓧ** to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* brings you something no other magazine can - playable demos. Offering exclusive levels, tracks and missions, our playable DVD enables you try the very latest PS2 games before you buy, often weeks, even months before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$100 game when you can try it out on our cover-mounted DVD? From *Burnout 3* and *MGS3* to *V8 Supercars 2* and *Jak 3*, we've always featured playable demos of the games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our DVD is the best bargain on the shelves.

DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.

Demo Disc Returns

Official PlayStation 2 Magazine
P.O. Box 1037, Bondi Junction
NSW 1355

BRAVE: THE SEARCH FOR SPIRIT DANCER

DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**

GAME TYPE: **PLATFORMER**

OUT: **NOW**

PLAYERS: **1**

Do not adjust your PS2. *Brave* may take a while to load up, but it's worth it. You'll be playing the opening level from the game where young *Brave* is learning the basics with a little help from The Shaman. After you get the hang of things then you can get in there and start exploring the jungle. It's kind of like the jungle in *MGS3*, but less guards and more cartoon bugs. If you don't care much for the story and just want to jump into the action, then hit **▶** to skip the cut-scenes. However, they are a treat to watch and give you some handy hints on how to play the game.



Other magazines let you watch, OPS2 lets you play

FORMULA ONE 05

DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**

GAME TYPE: **RACING**

OUT: **NOW**

PLAYERS: **1**

CHALLENGE!

See if you can get under 4 mins 19 seconds at Imola!

Come get a taste of what F1 racing is all about. There'll be three teams to choose from in this demo, Redbull, Ferrari and Renault – and two tracks to race on, Imola and Catalunya. Make your preferences, hit start race and then put the pedal to the metal. It's worth checking out all three teams just to see how much of a difference there is between the vehicles. Michael Schumacher's Ferrari team is obviously the pick of the bunch but don't forget, Redbull will give you wings. Also, try to keep your ride in tip-top condition – otherwise the only flag you'll be seeing is the black one to signal that you're out of the race. Whammy!



WORMS 4: MAYHEM

DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**

GAME TYPE: **STRATEGY**

OUT: **AUGUST**

PLAYERS: **1-4**

This demo is huge. You can play a story game or a quick game if you want just want to satisfy that little voice in your head that tells you to blow stuff up. However, if you've got some mates around then you'd be crazy not to check out the mayhem you can cause in the multiplayer mode. Most of the classic weapons are there



YS: ARK OF NAPISHTIM

DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**

GAME TYPE: **RPG**

OUT: **SEPTEMBER**

PLAYERS: **1**

for you to go nuts with, but there are plenty of surprising pick-ups that you'll just have to get your hands on! We recommend using the sniper rifle and zooming in on your opponents face. Then after you've had enough of watching them squeal and shudder, pull the trigger for the icing on the cake! Mmmmm... delicious!

What do you get when you cross a RPG and a platformer? The answer is Ys. The opening intro explains how lead character Adol Christin arrived on the Canaan Islands and came under the care of a reclusive race of elves. It's Adol's job to solve a mystery involving a strange, but hot, red fairy. You know, the usual. You can play from the beginning in a new



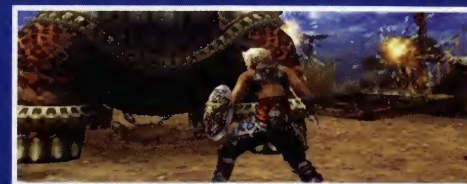
game or you can also tackle the Time Attack mode for something completely original for the RPG genre. While Ys is very linear, you can't help but just continue hacking and slashing everything in your path until there's nothing left. the Surgeon General may have to put a warning on Ys: Ark of Napishtim because it's just so damn addictive.

Bonus gaming

Additional demos and videos for your gaming pleasure!

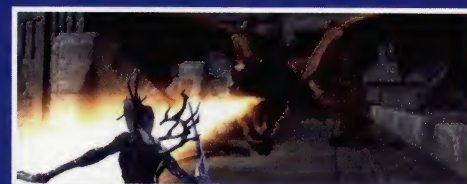
Platinum Final Fantasy X-2

The new Charlie's Angels? We'd still do them.



Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone

If you're into D&D, then you have got to hit this.



Pro Evolution Soccer 4

The ultimate soccer simulation is back again.



Soul Calibur II

See why this game is just so damn good.



Spyro: A Hero's Tail

He doesn't like to blow smoke up his arse, but he's got himself a pretty kick ass game.



Video

50 Cent: Bulletproof
Stargate: The Alliance
Total Overdose
God of War and more...

Next month

KONG

THE 8TH WONDER OF THE WORLD™

The world's first hands-on report!

Plus:

- We go toe-to-toe with *Hitman*'s Agent 47!
- The essential PSP launch guide!
- *God of War* and more playable on the disc!



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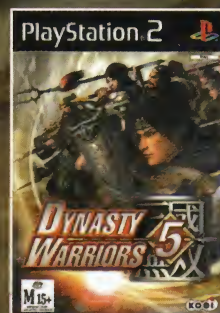




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DYNASTY WARRIORS 5

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PlayStation 2



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